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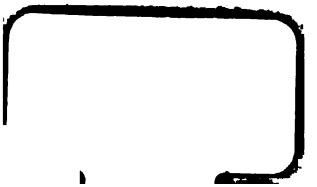

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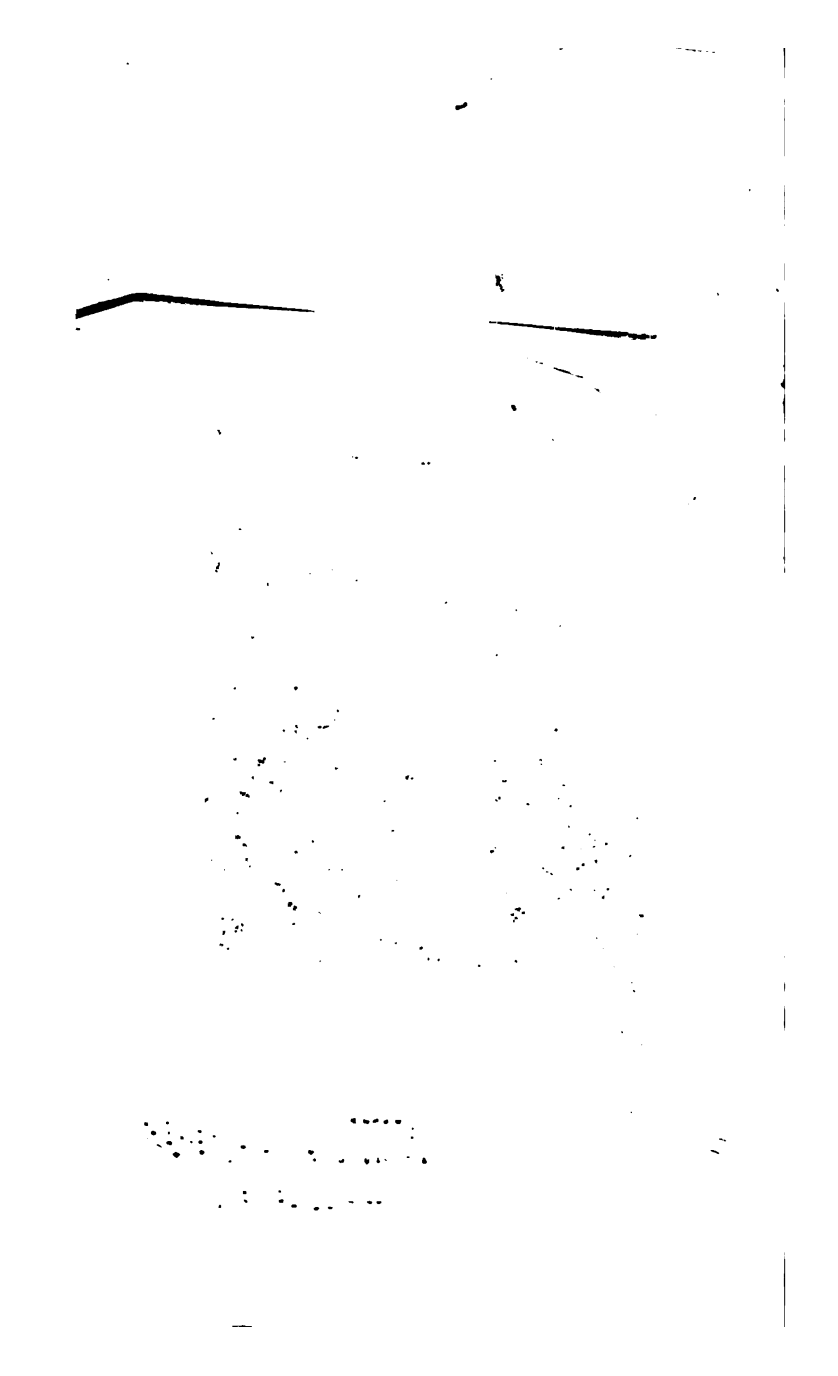

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY,

BY

BLAISE PASCAL.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

WITH AN ORIGINAL MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

ISAAC TAYLOR, ESQ.
AUTHOR OF "NATURAL HISTORY OF ENTHUSIASM," ETC.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

Those periodic agitations to which all social systems, whether civil or religious, are liable, carry with them a twofold and opposite influence; the one, and the most direct, tending to give rise to similar movements in neighbouring communities; and the other, operating with hardly less force, to preclude any such convulsions where else they probably would, or certainly must, have taken place. By the very same spectacle of public commotions, minds of a certain class are animated to action, and hurried into the midst of perils; while others are as effectively deterred from giving scope to their rising energies. In this way every revolution which history records may be reckoned at once to have caused, and to have prevented kindred changes.

In no instance has this sort of double influence made itself more apparent than in that of the religious revolution which shook the European system in the sixteenth century; and after having watched the progress of the ecclesiastical renovation of northern Europe, as it spread from land to land, an inquiry, fraught with instruction, might be instituted, concerning that reaction of jealousy, terror, and pious caution, which, affecting many of the

eminent minds of southern Germany, Italy, Spain, and France, smothered those elements of faith and right reason, that, again and again, seemed to be indicating approaching and happy movements.

In Italy, in Austria, in Spain, in France, it was not merely that the dread of reform incited the ecclesiastical and secular authorities to a renewed vigilance, and induced them to have recourse to severities, such as might crush, at the instant, every beginning of change; but much more it was the vague dread of heresy, it was the horror inspired by the mere names of the Reformers, that broke the energy of the very men who, had they been left to the impulse of their own convictions, would, perhaps, themselves, have dared the vengeance of the church, and have led on a reformation.

This, if true any where, is so of France, in which country the smoldering fire that had there been repressed, while it had burst forth in Germany and England, continued, through more than a century, to impart an unusual warmth and intensity to the style of the preachers and writers of the Gallican church. In following the course of these noted, and, many of them, great and good men, ranged as they sometimes were on different sides in polemics, one is prompted, at every turn, to exclaim—'what reformers would Nicole, St. Cyran, Fenelon, Pascal, have been, could it have happened to them never to have heard the names of Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox?' The intelligence and piety of these, and of others, their companions, or their opponents, were, if one might so speak, affrighted into submission to the Romish despotism, not so much by the flames

of the protestant martyr's pile, as by the odium of his branded celebrity.

The writings of Pascal, as well the Thoughts, as the Provincial Letters, indicate, on almost every page, this latent and indirect influence of the horror of heresy, swaying his mind. The reader, as well in justice to the fame of this great man, as for his own satisfaction, needs to be reminded of the fact now adverted to: and if at any moment he be perplexed by the difficulty of reconciling Pascal's abject and superstitious romanism with the vigour and clearness of his understanding, and with the simplicity of his piety, he may remember that, beside other causes, not necessary here to specify, this eminent man was well aware that, to give the least indulgence to the impulses of mere reason on certain points of his belief, would involve nothing less than his passing at a leap, or his being forced across the awful gulph that yawned between the paradise of the church, and the gehenna of heresy. A mind like that of Pascal, although it might, in any particular direction, forbid itself to think at all, could never have stayed its own course, midway, had it once started.* And yet it was by submitting to

* A solitary expression, pregnant with meaning, occurs among the Thoughts, which should be here pointed out, as indicating Pascal's latent dissatisfaction with the system which he thought it necessary to uphold. So little does the sentiment contained in this passage accord with the general strain of the author's writings, that one is almost inclined to suppose it must have been, as in some other instances is clearly the case, a mere memorandum of an opinion upon which he intended to animadvert.—Il faut avoir une pensée de derière, et juger du tout par-là: en parlant cependant comme le peuple. The full import of this sentence is suggested rather more clearly in the author's own words than in the English; the translator having given the terms an

these restraints that he exposed himself to the keen taunts of Voltaire and Condorcet; and it is these bitter sarcasms, read by all the world, that have operated to destroy, almost entirely, the influence he must otherwise have exerted over the minds of his admiring countrymen. What might not have been the issue, for France, had Pascal and his friends held a higher course? But, stooping as they did, before the power that aided the Jesuit in trampling on the Jansenist, they left the field open to the Encyclopedists, who, in the next age, schooled the French people in those lessons of atheism that were to take effect amid the horrors of the revolution.

Putting out of view so much superstition or asceticism as belonged to Pascal's infirm bodily temperament, rather than to his principles as a romanist, and setting off also, here and there, a phrase in which he does homage to the Romish Church, he may fairly be accounted as one of ourselves—substantially, a protestant: and such in fact he was by his opposition to the spirit and corruptions of that church, as embodied in the society of Jesuits; as well as generally by the position he occupied in common with his friends, as obnoxious to the papacy. Protestants may very properly think of him rather as placed on the same radius with themselves, than as moving in another orbit.

In most instances, when any language meets the reader which reminds him painfully of the writer's enthralment to Rome, the incidental phrase, or the corollary in argument, instead of its standing insepa-

admissible and softened rendering, more in accordance with Pascal's known simplicity and sincerity. Art. cix, p. 288.

rably connected with the context, as it would have done, had the writer been himself a better papist, hangs loose, and might even be removed without leaving any perceptible hiatus;—nay, such excisions (although not in fact justifiable on the part of an editor or translator)* would be like the absorption of flaws from an otherwise spotless surface of marble. On this ground Pascal appears to much advantage when compared with Fenelon, who, although not his inferior in purity and elevation of spirit, had been carried much farther from the simplicity of the Christian system by the specious mysticism that has beguiled so many eminent men of the Romish communion. Pascal is no mystic:—his vigorous good sense, although it did not exempt him from some trivial superstitions in his personal conduct, held him back on the brink of that dim gulph wherein secluded speculatists, of every age, have so often been lost. It is thus sometimes that a strong man, who would instantly burst a rope wherewith any might attempt to confine him, yet quietly suffers himself to be held down by a thread. Pascal's French editors, who jeer at his bodily mortifications, and his frivolous observances, had not sufficient acquaintance with the history of religion to be conscious of the proof he gave of a substantial force of mind in keeping himself clear of the sophistical pietism by which, on all sides, he was surrounded.

The Thoughts of Pascal should never be read without a knowledge of the circumstances that at-

* It is proper here to state that the translation now offered to the public is not a garbled one. Pascal, in former instances, has been given to the English reader by those who have thought themselves at liberty to suppress many of the Thoughts—in fact

tended their production. To these the reader will, of course, advert, as they are stated in the memoir attached to the present edition. In how few instances would an author's loose private notes, and the undigested materials out of which he had designed to construct what might be intelligible to others, present so much appearance of consistency and order, as, in fact, belong to this collection. Whatever abruptness there may seem in many of the transitions, nevertheless a real and ascertainable unity of purpose pervades the whole. This one purpose, manifestly governing the writer's mind at all times, appears even in those of the Thoughts that relate immediately to the mathematics, or to other secular subjects; for it is evident that Pascal was constantly intent upon the great business of establishing sacred truths; and that, with this view, he laboured so to lay down the principles of reasoning in geometry, or in the physical sciences, as should secure an advantage, more or less direct, for the evidences of Christianity.

It should be said that the confusion in which Pascal's papers were found after his death, and which belonged also to the earlier editions of the Thoughts, has been, in great measure, remedied by later editors; and especially by Condorcet, who, little as he relished the principles or the argument of his distinguished countryman, applied to the best purpose, his own eminently perspicacious mind, in disentangling the disordered mass, and in reducing it to some logical consistency. Bossut, adopting, in

whatever did not meet the translator's theological taste. No such outrage is attempted in the present edition.

the main, Condorcet's classification, brought it to a higher perfection, and thus, by the labours of these two competent men, the modern reader forgoes, perhaps, but little of the benefit he might have derived from the author's own cares in preparing his thoughts for the public eye.*

Leaving the Thoughts in the order to which they have so well been reduced, we shall find a convenience in assuming, for a while, a rather different principle of arrangement, as the ground of the remarks that are to occupy this introductory essay.

With this view, then, we may consider the Thoughts as bearing upon—

I. Abstract Philosophy, and the general principles of reasoning.

II. Ethics; and more especially, the Pathology of Human Nature.

III. Devotional Sentiment.

IV. Christian Theology.

V. The argument in behalf of Religion against Atheists, and of Christianity against Infidels, to which are appended incidental apologies—for Romanism, and for Jansenism; or for the Port Royal party.

* In some instances, the contrarieties of opinion, between one paragraph and the next, was such, and so alternate, as to make it certain that the author had intended to throw his materials into the form of a dialogue, between a sceptic and himself; and his editors have, in some cases, as in chap. vii of the present translation, actually completed what was clearly Pascal's meaning. Unless understood as a dialogue, the whole would be contradictory and unintelligible. It is probable that, in some other places, where the indication is less manifest, a similar distribution of the Thoughts was in the author's mind when he committed them to writing.

In the first place, then, (nor need the merely religious reader think this branch of the subject of no interest to him) something demands to be said of that portion of Pascal's Thoughts which relates to Abstract Philosophy, and to the general principles of reasoning.

It does not appear that Pascal had become acquainted with the writings of Lord Bacon, which, even so long as forty years after their first publication, had not so commanded the attention of the philosophic world in England or abroad, as to ensure their having been read by all who themselves pretended to take rank among philosophers. His scientific writings, however, afford unquestionable indications of the fact that, along with the great minds of the age, he deeply resented the antiquated tyranny of the pseudo-science, and of the jargon logic, which so long had shackled the European intellect. "The true philosophy," says he, "is to scout philosophy:" nor was this uttered with a cynical feeling, or in affectation; for in other places he deliberately declares his contempt, both of the Aristotelian logic, and of the method of prosecuting physical inquiries, then commonly practised.* But although he himself, as in the signal instance of the barometrical experiment, followed, as if by instinct, the methods of modern science, (or rather anticipated those methods) and although, in the admirable article on "authority in matters of philosophy," he convincingly shows the error of the antiquated system, and points out a better path, yet it does not appear that he had, like Bacon, so digested his no-

* Page 381. Compare Novum Organum, lib. i, 9.

tions as to be able to announce a new and hopeful physical logic. On the contrary, his tone in reference to natural philosophy is, altogether, desponding, and he seems so little to have foreseen the happy issue of the revolution which was then actually in its commencement, that he turns towards the mathematics as the only ground on which (the ground of pure faith excepted) any fixed principles, or absolute truth, could be met with.

"Every body asks for the means of avoiding error; and the professors of logic pretend to show us the way: but, in fact, the geometrician (mathematician) is the only man who reaches it. Beyond the range of this science, and of what closely follows it, there are no real demonstrations." *

This is now true only in a very limited sense; and had Pascal lived to witness, and to take the lead in (as he would had he lived) the conquests of modern science, he would have granted that there *are* conclusions, not mathematical, which it would be most absurd to speak of as at all *less certain* than this—that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. It can no longer be admitted, except in a loose and rhetorical style, that, "The sciences touch, at their two extremes—the absolute ignorance of the vulgar, and the conscious ignorance of the greatest and most accomplished minds; who, having learned all that man may know, have found that they know nothing; and who feel themselves to have come home just to that point of universal ignorance whence they started." † This mode of speaking, which we still allow the moralist or preacher

* Page 379. † Page 78.

to use, who vaguely compares the circle of human science, with the infinite and absolute omniscience of the Eternal mind, has actually no meaning, if now applied to any *one* branch of philosophy, as compared with *another*. "What does man know!" exclaims the pensive moralist; and we leave him to reply—"nothing." But if the geometrician were to start up, among his fellows, in the fields of reason, and say "I alone know any thing:—all your pretended sciences are no better than the illusive mists that torment the thirsty traveller on a sandy wilderness:"—we then join issue with this exclusionist; and are prepared to affirm, in behalf of a good portion of all the modern sciences, that they are not a whit less substantial, or less certain, than geometry itself. Pascal, could we now challenge him, would grant as much as this, and would therefore rescind some six or eight of his Thoughts.

Mischief arises, in many instances, and especially some damage accrues to the argument in support of Christianity, from the error of confounding the *abstract* certainty or the directness of this or that method of proof, with the certainty of particular propositions, or facts. It would be well if all obscurity were removed from about this very necessary distinction.—Let it be remembered then, that the demonstrations of geometry are, as every one knows, regular, definite, and infallible: while, on the other hand, the evidence of testimony is (to speak of it abstractedly) often circuitous, and liable to be fallacious. Be it so; and yet, in fact, there are ten thousand instances in which, not merely is it wise and safe to accept of testimony, as the best sort of

proof, under the circumstances, which we can obtain; but in which it would be nothing else but sheer folly to speak of facts, so established, as in any degree *less certain* than are the propositions of Euclid. If seven hundred or seven thousand inhabitants of a town affirm that, last week, or last year, or ten years ago, their market house was burnt down, are we free, sagely to withhold our belief—to shrug the shoulders, and to say—"What you allege may be all very true; but, pardon me, human testimony falls so very far short of mathematical demonstration, that I cannot admit the fact you speak of to be fully established." And what holds good in a comparison of testimony with mathematical proof, holds good also in regard to the physical sciences. The deductions of chemistry, for example, many of them, and even where they involve no mathematical induction, claim to be spoken of as indubitably certain: and so in other departments of philosophy; nor can it be esteemed any thing but a foolish and pedantic exaggeration to repeat now, what, in Pascal's time, there yet seemed ground to say, namely that—'Out of geometry, man knows nothing.' There is indeed a class of persons who, for the sinister purpose of throwing a cloud over the evidence of Christianity, will consent to compromise even the best portions of human knowledge;—the mathematics only excepted. Such persons, knowing well that men will continue to act upon the presumption that the physical sciences are certain, are quite content so long as the sceptical inference of their doctrine is left to attach alone to religion: Pascal himself would have drawn an opposite practical inference from his premises, and have said—'Chris-

tianity demands your submission because its truth *is as well* established as that of the physical sciences, on the certainty of which you every day stake your interests, and venture your lives.' But we, and especially in the present state of philosophy, are free to deal in another, and a more strenuous manner with pedantic scepticism, and to say—*Many* things are certainly true, besides the propositions of geometry; and among such certainties, are all the principal points of history;—and among these, preëminently, the facts of the gospel history.

Assuming what we consider as probable, if not absolutely certain, that Pascal had not met with the Novum Organum, or the De Argumentis, it is curious to observe the similarity, or even identity of sentiment, and sometimes of language, which may be traced in those passages where the one and the other speak of the then-existing and ancient philosophy. The scientific reader may with advantage, compare the thoughts referred to in the margin* with the preface to the Novum Organum, and with the introductory axioms of the first book. A remarkable coincidence, both of principle and of expression, occurs in the passages in which these two great men state the relative claims of reason and of authority, or of antiquity, as bearing respectively upon the physical sciences, and upon theology:† nor can we doubt that, had Pascal lived longer, and directed the

* The reader is referred to the entire chapter, (xxvi), on authority in matters of Philosophy; as well as to the next on Geometry, and to that on the Art of Convincing.

† Compare Pascal's Thoughts on Authority, with cap. i, lib. ix, of the De Argumentis, where a remarkable coincidence of thought and expression presents itself. Also aph. 61 and 89, Nov. Organum.

main force of his mind to philosophy, he would have accelerated its advance, in his own country at least; and starting forward from the ground where Descartes moved only in a vortex, and where Leibnitz wandered over the wastes of metaphysics, would have opened the road of genuine science;—nay, not improbably he might have snatched from England the glory of a portion of Newton's discoveries.

By no means to be compared with Bacon for grasp of mind, or for richness, versatility, or boundless faculty of invention, Pascal had more of that caution, justness of intellect, and mathematical simplicity, which belonged to Newton; nor did he want, *intellectually* at least, that high and true independence, and that strong good sense, which impelled the one and the other to break away from the intanglements of the old philosophy. Considering however his entire constitution, the animal and moral, as well as the intellectual, we may the less regret his having been so soon diverted from scientific pursuits. The reformer, whether in the civil, the ecclesiastical, or the scientific world, should not be merely one of lofty stature in mind, but of a robust moral conformation. In every age, no doubt, there are minds (accomplishing their course in obscurity) that divine the changes which are to be effected in a future age; but in part the animal force, and in part the opportunity, are wanting to them which are requisite for effectively agitating the inert elements around them. The progress of man has been so slow, not so much because nature generates so few great minds in each age, as because a rare combination of intellectual faculties, of moral qualities, of animal forces, and of

external means, are required for enabling any individual to give effect to those improvements which, more than a few in every age, could theoretically have anticipated.

No modern philosophical writer has better than Pascal, marked out the ground occupied by the sciences, and which lies as a middle region between, on the one hand, those elementary principles which are always to be taken for granted, and to be considered as certain, although not capable of being defined or proved;—and, on the other hand—the illimitable space, filled with what is unknown, and perhaps incrutable, but toward which, though never to pervade it, the sciences are continually making incursions, and pushing out their boundaries. Nevertheless the principle of reasoning which he lays down, as universally applicable and sufficient, and which he affirms to be fully carried out in geometry, namely, to define whatever admits of definition; that is to say, every thing except our elementary notions; and to prove every thing which may be questioned, and which is not self-evident, has in fact only a limited range.* This axiom of reasoning, or logical law, applicable as it may be to whatever is *purely abstract*, can subserve no practical purpose or only a very limited one, if brought to bear upon the physical sciences. Pascal cannot be thought to have furnished us with the elements of *Physical Logic*, which still remain to be fully acertained, and well digested.

To take an example;—what progress could he himself have made in determining the question relative to the alleged weight of the atmosphere, and which he so triumphantly brought to a conclusion,

* Chapter xxviii.

by the mere aid of the rules he proposes for deciding between truth and error? We may boldly say, none at all. It is at this point, where heretofore philosophers had come to a stand, that Bacon steps in, and opens wide the path to genuine knowledge, by showing that the methods of *abstract science*, wherein all the entities to be spoken of are creatures of the mind, and therefore fully comprehended and embraced by it—that these methods are totally inapplicable to the *physical sciences*, in relation to which "man knows absolutely nothing beyond what he may actually have observed." Whether there is in nature, or whether there may be, a perfect vacuum, is a question in deciding which, neither the logic of geometry, nor the logic of metaphysics, can afford us the least assistance: a question like this, involves a knowledge of the most occult properties of matter; and in fact, it is a question concerning which, even modern science, is not yet in a position to pronounce with confidence. We well know indeed that it is possible, and that it is very easy to exclude, from a certain space, all ponderable or tangible bodies; and we moreover know that the rise of fluids in an exhausted tube is caused by no such "horror of a vacuum," as had been attributed to nature; and that it is as simple a phenomenon as the rise of the scale out of which we have removed the weight that had held the beam in equilibrio. But the fact of a real and absolute vacuum is still a mystery.

There are few portions of the Thoughts, if any, that seem to have been more deliberately digested, or that are in fact better condensed, than the entire

article on the Art of Persuasion,"* or what might be termed—the Elements of a true Logic. Pascal, having distinguished between, on the one hand, the methods, various as they may be, which are proper for influencing the minds of men, with all their predilections and personal inclinations, and for bringing them to some given point; and on the other hand, the process of severe reasoning, irrespectively of the condition of the mind to which an argument is addressed; and after professing his inability to offer any system of rules available for the former purpose, proceeds to state the rudiments of the latter method, and which, as stated by him, are substantially those of geometrical demonstration.

"This art, which I call the art of persuasion, and which, properly, is nothing but the management of such proofs as are regular and perfect, consists of three essential parts namely—1. To expound the terms which we intend to employ, by clear definitions; —2. To propound principles or axioms, such as are in themselves evident, for the purpose of establishing the points in question:—3. and then, always to substitute mentally, in the demonstrations, the definitions, in the place of the things defined."†

"In adhering to this method," says our author, "we can never fail to produce conviction:" and this may be granted so long as the method itself is applied to those cases only to which it properly attaches.

* The translator cannot be blamed for rendering—De l'Art de Persuader—"on the Art of Persuasion," and yet what Pascal really insists upon in this chapter is not the art of *persuasion*, of which he professes himself no master; but it is the art of *convincing*, or of conducting a purely rational process to a peremptory conclusion.

† Page 371.

Errors incalculable, and much more than half the logical verbiage, metaphysical, ethical, political, and theological, that encumbers our shelves, has sprung from the practical mistake of forcing the *abstract* method of reasoning upon subjects that are beyond its range:—that is to say which are in whole, or in part, physical. Now it would be easy to show that, while Pascal rejects with scorn the jargon of the Barbara et Baralipton,* his own sovereign method is really reducible to the conditions of the syllogistic process:—the substance is the same; the phrasology only being different; for we have but to put in the place of his "self-evident axiom," or principle, the major term of a syllogism; and in the place of the definition, in any particular instance, the minor, and then the "mental substitution" which he speaks of, will stand for the middle term, and involve the conclusion.

In all cases in which the notions, or the things to which a process of reasoning relates, are *the creations of the human mind*, or are, in some other way, thoroughly understood, in their inmost constitution, as, for example, in the several branches of the pure mathematics—in all such cases, what is required in establishing a particular proposition is nothing but to exhibit the relation which a certain quantity or quality bears to some other known quantity or quality. Mathematical reasoning is only the showing forth, or unfolding, of *relations*: and the same may be said of all reasoning which is purely abstract, or metaphysical. In no such process of reasoning, if scientifically conducted, are we liable to error *by ignorance*

* Page 381.

of the things spoken of; for these things are notions which the mind penetrates and grasps in the most absolute manner.

But now let it be supposed that some one or more of the things to be defined is an entity, known to the human mind through the senses only, and known in some few of its properties only, or known merely by a limited evidence of testimony; what then becomes of Pascal's "sovereign and infallible method of proof?" it is altogether unavailing. We thoroughly know what we mean by an elliptic curve, generated in such or such a manner; and we may reason concerning its properties with the most entire assurance. But, in the place of a certain curve, abstractedly considered, let it be imagined that we are presuming to predict, irrespectively of experiment, what will be the curve formed by a stream of water, issuing from an aperture in a vessel. In this, as in any similar instance, we find, or soon shall find, that we are "reckoning without our host;" or, in other words, that, in relation to whatever is *physical* there are occult causes at work, all of which must be thoroughly known, before our abstract methods of reasoning can take effect: In physical inquiries, of whatever kind they may be, a vast deal is to be done before we ought to think ourselves in a position, either to define our terms, or to propound our axioms:—so much, in truth, have we to do, that, what remains to be done after this preliminary work has been effected, is a mere form—a verbal winding up, which demands no rules nor any peculiar skill. What pedantry can be more impertinent than that of bringing in the solemnities of the syllogism *after* a course of experiments has

so far laid open the constitution of bodies, or their mode of operation one upon another, as that we may safely deduce some general principles concerning them?

All this is now well understood within the circle of the modern physical sciences; and Pascal, had he lived to witness, and to take a part in, what has been effected since his time, would himself have been among the foremost to put in practice modes of reasoning altogether differing from that which he here advances as the one and the only method.

But owing to the indistinctness and imperfection of our notions on subjects connected with morals, religion, and the philosophy of the human mind, and to the vagueness of language, as related to these subjects, the very important distinction between what is purely *abstract*, and what is *physical*, does not here force itself upon our notice,* nor, in fact, has it hitherto been much regarded or clearly understood. Hence it has happened that in treating questions of mental and moral philosophy, and of theology too, the logic of *abstract* science has been applied to subjects that are either of a mixed kind, or are perhaps altogether physical. The consequence has been that whatever is the most absurd, and whatever calumniates the Divine nature, or human nature, has been made to appear indubitable, by some process of syllogism.

* Bacon, in innumerable places of his writings, insists upon the distinction here adverted to, and loudly claims the Philosophy of the Mind as belonging to Physics. Universæ illæ (the faculties of the Mind) circa quas versantur Scientiæ Logicæ, et Ethicæ; sed in doctrina de anima origines ipsarum tractari debent, idque *physice*. De Aug. Lib. iv, cap. 3. And see particularly the 82d axiom of the Novum Organum, on the inutility of the existing Logic as applied to Physics.

False theories, and errors of reasoning, in relation to to the motions of solids and fluids, or to the chemical properties of bodies, are sure, after a little while, to meet their refutation by an appeal to facts and experiments; and in such cases we use no ceremony in discarding the logic which has been found to have led us astray. It is otherwise in ethics and theology, wherein errors of a kind to impair the most momentous practical principles, may long maintain themselves, behind the thorny hedges of metaphysical logic. The cessation, in our own times, of theological controversy, and the dead silence that, for some years past, has prevailed within the circle of polemics, may be attributed, as well to other incidental causes, as to a latent feeling that those methods of scholastic disputation which have not as yet been renounced, would, if again put in activity, bring back modes of thinking and opinions, that have been silently consigned to oblivion by the spread of scriptural notions, and by the good sense and better feelings of our times; and especially by the indirect influence of the spirit of Christian zeal and benevolence.

It seemed a proper part of this Introductory Essay to premise a caution concerning that portion of Pascal's Thoughts to which, it is manifest, he himself attached a peculiar value; and which perhaps he would have singled out as the most important of them all. Be it remembered then, that, while Pascal's axioms of logic are perfectly sound, when brought to bear upon subjects that already lie wholly within the grasp of the human mind, they can serve us not at all when we approach ground where our knowledge is confessedly partial, and all our notions

dim or unfixed. And this assuredly must be admitted in relation to whatever concerns either the Divine Nature, or the constitution of human nature, or the conditions of the unseen world:—on these grounds we may account ourselves qualified to construct syllogisms then, when we have so enlarged our acquaintance with the subjects in question as to be able to define our terms, and to state, without fear of contradiction, our self-evident axioms.

II. We have next to consider Pascal's Thoughts, as embodying his notions of Ethics, and, more especially, as exhibiting the views he took of the actual condition of human nature, and of its pathology.

It is in the inimitable Provincial Letters, rather than in this collection of his Thoughts, that Pascal appears to advantage as the firm, acute, and Christian-like moralist. In truth that invigorating excitement at the impulse of which those letters were produced, elevated the writer above himself; or rather, we should say, this extraordinary motive raised him, for a while, to his own real level, beneath which he was too often depressed by the weight of his many bodily infirmities. Not a few of his Thoughts, and especially those which convey his notions of human life, are impressions of the mind of Pascal—the valetudinarian, the sufferer, the cœlebs, and the recluse: but when thoroughly roused to come forth as the champion of religion, of morality, and of an oppressed society, he then appears in his proper strength—the strength of his unmatched intellect: — the feeble frame and shattered nerves of the writer have no part in the Provincial Letters.

And yet we must acknowledge that, as the anato-

mist of the human heart, and as the keen analyst of its springs of action, the very infirmities of Pascal's animal temperament yielded him an aid. There is, as we well know, a flush and force of full health which is rarely if ever combined with any nice discrimination of character, or with a piercing discernment of the evanescent differences that distinguish man from man. The robust and the happy (the physically happy) are themselves in too much movement to allow of that tranquil subsidence of the thoughts—that refluence of the tide of life, which favours an exact acquaintance with what is latent in human nature. It is not the merry voyagers, who are gaily careering, by favour of wind and tide, upon the sea of life—it is not these that know much of the pebbly bottom, or of the deep grottoes, or gloomy caverns beneath. But Pascal had much to do with the ebbings of animal life; and thus he became familiar with those searching trains of thought that attend superior minds in seasons of extreme physical depression or exhaustion. When the pulse of life is slow and feeble, the spirit seems to be able to take a nicer hold of minute objects, and to exercise more delicate powers of perception.

Few writers, and perhaps none but the one—his countryman and contemporary, with whom we shall presently find occasion to compare him, have dissected the human heart with a nicer hand than Pascal. His qualification for these difficult intellectual operations appears to have resulted from an uncommon combination of the analytic faculty, proper to the geometrician, with an exquisite moral sense, more often possessed, in this eminent degree, by woman, than by man; and very rarely associated with the scientific

faculty. Another instance of the sort does not occur to us. He has himself described these two opposite endowments,* and has spoken of them as seldom if ever possessed by the same individual. What he intends in the passage here referred to, is, on the one hand, the mathematical power which holds in its grasp a number of principles, with a constant recollection of their various inter-relations, and remote consequences; and, on the other, the acute, intuitive perception of minute differences among things which, to common eyes, are undistinguishable; and he affirms that this power and habit of instantaneous discrimination indisposes a mind, so endowed, to give attention to formal methods of proof; while the mathematician, on his part, pays as little respect to perceptions the accuracy of which cannot be methodically proved.

Pascal himself, although he claims no such rare combination of endowments, was at once a proficient in the severest habits of thought, and accustomed to carry the analytic process to its ultimate point; while yet he possessed a penetrating intuition in relation to the commingled elements of our moral nature. So it was that, while mathematical minds, generally, view with contempt, or entirely overlook, whatever cannot be strictly defined, he, although preëminently mathematical, pursued, with as sedulous a curiosity, the occult movements of the human heart, as he did the complex properties of the cycloid.

* Pp. 414—417. Pascal varies a little his phrases in designating these two orders of mind, calling them respectively l'esprit de justesse, and l'esprit de geometrie. The one is force et droiture d'esprit, and the other l'étendue. Again the opposite of l'esprit de geometrie, he names l'esprit de finesse—and what he means is something which, in Scotland, has been called gumption.

Certain portions of this collection of Thoughts can hardly fail to suggest a comparison of Pascal with Rochefoucauld, his celebrated contemporary; and this involuntary comparison between the religious and the non-religious anatomist of the human heart, brings with it some curious reflections. These two eminent writers were alike remarkable for a justness and perspicacity of understanding which imparted an admirable simplicity and propriety to their style. Both had a great share in fixing the usage of their native language, and in imparting to it that elegance and precision, as well as that thorough transparency, which has become the characteristic and the charm of French philosophical literature. Both, moreover, in their habits of thought, give evidence of their having breathed the atmosphere of a court, where, in a peculiar degree, every thing was artificial and false; for although Pascal stood many degrees more remote than the gay Rochefoucauld from the circle of corruption, his rank in society, and his connections, placed him in a position where the court and its manners, were always within his view. With the one therefore, as well as with the other, it is not MAN, who is thought of and described; but the artificial men and women of the French court; and inasmuch as these sophisticated personages were, in an extraordinary degree, cased in the extrinsic and illusory recommendations of rank and luxury—swaddled, like mummies, in perfumed and painted rottenness; and as they needed a great deal of *unwinding*, before the real dimensions and merits of the character could be ascertained, so both these searching spirits acquired a peculiar readiness in performing this strip-

ping operation: when once they set about denuding human nature, they bared it to the very bones.

Those ethical writers whose happy lot it has been to become conversant only, or chiefly, with societies in an unsophisticated state, have usually allowed every thing to pass as really fair and good, which seemed to be so; nor have they often reached any nice discriminations of character. But, on the contrary, those who, like the two writers now spoken of, and others who occupy a similar place in French literature, have known much of the worst specimens of human nature, have lost almost, or altogether, the power of believing any thing at all to be genuine; and have carried the practice of analysis to a point which, in reference to human nature, involves an absolute and universal scepticism, and a cheerless contempt of mankind at large.

Rochefoucauld, although himself an amiable man, actually reached this extreme;—and the issue, we have in the "Maxims and Moral Reflections." Pascal was saved from it by his religious sentiments, and by his constant recognition of the original excellence of human nature, and of the immortal dignity opened to man in the Christian system. The one looked no farther than to the degenerate specimens of humanity before him; the other compared these same specimens with an ideal form of absolute moral beauty and perfection. The one views, with cold derision, what the other weeps over. The courtier, in the prospect of wide-spread corruption, indulges his curiosity, undisturbed either by hope or fear:—but the Christian philosopher gazes upon the same field of death, not with unmixed dismay, but with a

breathless expectation, waiting until the Spirit from on high shall, in the appointed season, return to reanimate these ghastly forms!

If Rochefoucauld betrays any sort of uneasiness, it is simply that impatience to unmask pretension, and to get every thing valued at its price, and at nothing more, which usually attaches to those who are gifted (or afflicted) with more penetration than their neighbours.—If only every thing can be brought down to its true dimensions, if, whatever has hitherto appeared, and is generally accounted noble, can henceforward be thought of as common, or sordid; if only the professors of virtue and honesty can be brought to confess themselves false; if all this can be done, and when whatever has stood high, has been well trodden in the mire, then Rochefoucauld will be content: he has no aspirations, no struggling of a better nature to wrankle in his heart. Not so Pascal, who, himself keenly alive to excellence, mourns to see so many dead to it. This contrast between minds, in some respects, of so analogous a conformation, offers a specimen, the most complete, of two classes of men—the one knowing human nature to consent to it, as it is:—the other, knowing it to sigh and to blush for it, and to attempt its restoration.

A few instances of similarity and of contrast, gathered from the Thoughts, and from the Maxims, may not improperly be adduced to illustrate the comparison we have here instituted, and which is in itself of some significance. In certain passages, as in the one first to be quoted, Pascal eems to have lost hold of that redeeming element

which usually distinguishes him from his contemporary, and allows himself to employ the language of exaggeration (against which the reader of the Thoughts need be on his guard, as the occasional fault of our author's manner). "Human life is illusion perpetual, and nothing else. All that is passing in the world is a process of deceiving and flattering, one the other. Nobody ever speaks of us to our face, as they speak behind our back. There is no other bond of union among men than this system of mutual deception. Very few friendships would subsist if every one knew what his friend said of him in his absence; although it is there that he speaks sincerely, and dispassionately. Man therefore is nothing but pretence, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both in himself, and in relation to others; and all these dispositions, so remote from justice and reason, spring naturally from his heart."*

How comes there, we may ask, to be any counterfeiting of that which, in fact, has no existence at all? If there really be no sincerity or honesty in the world, what does the word *hypocrisy* mean? How is it that mankind have contrived to form to themselves the notions of falseness, deception, guile, if they have had no means of conceiving of the opposite qualities? If indeed *all* men were liars, would the very designation—liar, ever have been thought of? Had our author never read the Psalmist's confession of his own unwarrantable precipitancy, who had said, "in his haste"—in a fit of splenetic irritation—"all men are liars"? Dismal exaggerations of this sort, although they confute themselves, nevertheless are

* Page 3.

of very ill consequences, on every side:—They confirm the debauched in their favourite doctrine—That none are better than themselves; and that all virtue is mere pretence;—they dishearten the upright; and they tend to render the presumptuous and pharisaic, who are conscious of some principle, still more arrogant—each thinking himself a phœnix, and believing that truth and goodness will die with him. Let a Rochefoucauld talk in this style; but alas that a Pascal should echo any such cavernous sounds! Ethical and theological overstatements, like bales of heavy goods piled upon deck, make the vessel of religion lurch dangerously, when the wind blows; and many have made shipwreck of faith and virtue in this very way.

Rochefoucauld says as much, in his own manner, as Pascal; but then he gives his dismal report a smart and pleasant turn; and this sparkling of his language serves to moderate what, if nakedly said, must shock our best feelings; as for instance.—"How extensive soever may be the discoveries we have made in the country of self-love (or selfishness) there always remains beyond, unknown lands enough."—which means, in the writer's dialect, that self-love stretches in fact, over the entire surface of human nature:—but then the noisome assertion is politely phrased. In the same spirit this subtile writer, instead of terrifying the reader by too much at once, creeps on, splitting open the virtues, one by one—honesty, chastity, moderation, beneficence, constancy, courage, friendship, and showing you that not one of them contains a kernel, or is any thing more than a husk of selfishness. Such are the maxims of Rochefou-

cauld; various in apparent meaning; but constant and uniform in the one point of proving that there is *no* virtue in the world, and that, hypocrisy apart, all men are absolutely on a level, all equally unprincipled, insincere, selfish, base. But this is said *piecemeal* of the virtues and vices; not bluntly and roundly, as thus:—

"Pride is the same in all men; nor is there any other difference than that which results from the variety of means resorted to for its indulgence, and the modes of displaying it."

"Sincerity is an opening of the heart, met with in very few; and that which one commonly sees is only a refined dissimulation, intended to excite the confidence of others."

"The hatred of falsehood is often only a latent ambition to render our testimony much set by, and to get a religious reverence attached to our words."

"What is true of ghosts, is true of real love—every body talks of both; but very few people have actually seen either."

"What mankind have called friendship, is only a convention, a reciprocal adjustment of interests, an exchange of good offices; in a word, it is only a traffic in which selfishness always goes into the market, in search of gain."

"However rare true love may be, true friendship is yet more rare."*

* Maximes et Réflexions Morales. How marvellously do philosophers overlook the simplest facts, when intent upon some process of refined analysis! Thus we are told that the emotion which expresses itself in laughter, involves always a feeling of contempt toward the object that immediately excites it, and a comfortable self-gratulation, arising from a secret reference to one's own superiority. Be it so. But an infant of twelve or

All this means much the same as what Pascal roundly affirms—that *every thing* is hollow and false in human nature. How far this miserable doctrine sprung, in the minds of these two eminent writers from their unhappy position, as conversant with little else but the debauchery of the French court, might fairly be determined by turning to a specific instance, in which what is affirmed strikes every one at once as a gross calumny, unless restricted to the most profligate circles or communities. Who that has known any thing of *English* female excellence, or who that has venerated mother, and has lived long enough to see a wife fondly respected by her mature children, can endure to hear it affirmed—"That there are

fifteen months bursts into loud and ecstatic laughter in beholding pussy's freaks and capers, in play with a cork and a string. It might have been thought that here was an instance of laughter *in its unsophisticated and elementary state*—laughter, just such as nature has given it to man. And will then these grave professors of "mental science" make us believe that this babe's mirth springs out of any such sensations of contempt toward poor puss, or of congratulations of itself as her superior? Learned nonsense, like this, might indeed generate a sort of laughter such as is supposed by these philosophers. This sort of laughter, however, is not *elementary;* but springs from complicated and artificial emotions: it is not a primitive but a secondary or derived mental state. Now, to come round to our point, the leading fault with Rochefoucauld, and his school, is the taking up of some secondary and artificial instance, of which he gives a very nice analysis, while the primitive element is wholly disregarded. As for example: Rochefoucauld assures us, "That praise is a refined flattery, which one offers to another, first as the purchase-money of his good-will, and secondly as evidence of his own discrimination, and his candour. All this may be true of sophisticated human nature; but there is, in unsophisticated minds—in the young, and the simple-hearted, and the generous, a pure spontaneous emotion of admiration of what, in any line, is excellent; and there is a *natural impulse*, to express this genuine emotion, and to render to him who has excited it, the tribute of our pleasurable feelings. Rochefoucauld can never see what is large and obvious, but only what requires a microscope, and the dissecting knife:—hence he has always been a great favourite with *short-sighted* folks.

very few women (which, with Rochefoucauld, means none) whose good qualities outlive their beauty." This might be no slander, spoken of the ladies of the court of Louis XIII; but it is abominably false if affirmed of English wives and mothers. And so of the greater part of this writer's sweeping libels upon his fellows. He thoroughly knew men and women of a certain class: not men and women fairly taken as specimens of humanity.

And what we are compelled to say, in the spirit of impartial criticism, of Rochefoucauld, must needs be said too of Pascal; nor would it be ingenuous so to yield to a sentiment of deference towards an eminent man, as to omit giving the caution with which his ethical representations ought to be read. Nor is this all; for, as we have already observed, while his personal infirmities, and the general exhaustion of his animal powers, favoured the exercise of that tranquil, penetrating discrimination which belonged to him; the very same constitutional depression manifestly disturbed the notions he entertained of the conditions of human life; and the indulgence of these feelings has exposed him to the jeers of his irreligious editors, Condorcet and Voltaire, who, when he exclaimed—"Quelle chimère est ce donc que l'homme?" exclaim by way of sufficient annotation "Vrai discours du malade!"—"Pascal parle toujours en malade, qui vent que le monde entier souffre."

Pascal says, "I blame alike those who undertake to commend man, and those who set themselves to blame him, and those who endeavour to divert him:"* "Ah" says Voltaire, "if you would but yourself

* Page 56.

have given way a little to amusement, you would have lived longer!" Yes, and if his personal piety had been free from asceticism, and his notions exempt from exaggeration, besides living longer—living to ripen his judgment, to digest his thoughts, and to think and write more, he might, not improbably, have exerted an extensive and lasting influence over the destinies of his country. Voltaire's notes upon Pascal are indeed, for the most part, cold, flippant, and sophistical, like every thing he has written, bearing upon religion; nevertheless, it is but justice to acknowledge that a vein of vigorous good sense runs through them, of which many religious writers might avail themselves, to great advantage.

It is very seldom, except when striving to carry a point, or to give to some important truth the advantage of a violent contrast, that Pascal runs into mysticism: he is not like Fenelon, the mystic always, and by constitution of mind: his statements however are sometimes such as need a little animadversion.—

"The true and only virtue is to hate oneself."—This, by itself, might pass, as meaning only, and by a figure, what our Lord intends when he enjoins his diciples to "hate father, and mother, and their own life also;" but when a phrase of this sort comes to be drawn out, and interpreted literally, by the writer who uses it, it amounts to what is untrue in fact, and unsound in principle.

"There is an injustice in allowing any one to attach himself to us; or to love us; although he may do so freely, and to his own satisfaction.....We! we, cannot be any one's end; we cannot satisfy any one:—Are we not soon to die, and thus the

object of their love will die? We are therefore to be blamed if we allow any fellow-creature to love us; or if we offer ourselves as lovable to any." More to the same purport might be quoted; and Pascal himself carried out this doctrine in his home circle; and, affectionate in temper as he was, he assumed a cold and dry manner towards his near and tender relations, with the view of turning them aside from "the idolatry of loving him." What a contrast is all this to the natural and *man-like* warmth of St. Paul, toward his personal friends! Did not St. Paul love his Lord supremely? and did he not lead others to do so too? yet he well knew that this sovereign motive was likely to take the firmest hold of those very minds that are the most alive to every human affection. Nothing can be more untrue in philosophy, or much more pernicious as a practical doctrine, than the principle, which Pascal appears to have assumed, That love is like a mathematical quantity, from which, if you deduct a part, so much less than the whole remains. If this were the fact, then indeed we should be bound to grudge every atom of affection which was diverted from the Creator, by the creature: —to love any thing but God would be—a fraud!

But how are all such theoretic statements scattered the moment we open the book of Divine Philosophy! The mystic says—'you must not love the creature, lest you deprive God of his due.' The Bible says—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart; and then *after* this *all* has been bestowed, it adds—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour —not to the exclusion of thyself but—*as thyself.*' Here indeed is good sense, and sound morality, and

true philosophy. Had the amiable and pious Pascal been a father (and how much more useful a writer would he then probably have been) he would have found a practical refutation of his theory of Love, the moment a second child was put, by its mother, into his paternal arms; for at that bright instant, instead of there taking place, in his bosom, a halving of the love of which his first-born had been the object, he would have felt (his heart near bursting at the time) that the very power of loving was now doubled, and more than doubled, so that, instead of loving the two, with a half love, for each; he loved both, and severally, with a double love.—This may not be mathematics; but assuredly it is human nature. And what holds with two, holds with seven, or with ten.

And so in regard to the devout sentiments; it is not the loving a wife and children that precludes our loving God; but the loving them with a love falsely so called, and which, if analysed, would be found to be nothing better than a refined selfishness:—intemperate in its degree, and involving elements of sensuality, pride, and vanity; and which re-acts upon others, out of the narrow circle of our affections, in a manner not much differing from hatred. The doating father or mother is very likely to be found a cold-hearted friend, and a surly neighbour; certainly not an eminent Christian.

Pascal, although a mathematician, was ordinarily well aware of the absurdity of applying mathematical logic to moral theorems: sometimes however he falls into this error; and on occasions too, in which the inference he so deduces is likely to be mischievous.

What havoc has there not been made of simple facts, and plain principles, by dint of irrefragable syllogisms! —By the help of logic, you may make it as clear as the sun at noon day—that there is no sun at noon day; or, at least, that nobody has ever yet seen him, or been warmed and cheered by his beams:—as for instance:—

"If there be a God, we should love him only; and not the creatures.—There is a God; let us then take no delight in the creatures. Wherefore, whatever impells us to attach ourselves to the creature is evil, inasmuch as this either prevents our serving God, if we know him, or prevents our inquiring after him, if we know him not. But we are full of concupiscence, therefore full of wickedness, therefore we are bound to hate ourselves, and every thing else which binds us to any thing, but to God alone."*

But in contradiction to this terse and specious logic, we hear God himself declaring that, "*every creature*" of his is "good;" and so far as it may minister to our real well being, to temperate delight, is "not to be refused by them that know the truth." And instead of "hating ourselves," we are to "cherish and nourish," while we keep in subjection, even that part of ourselves which is the seat of concupiscence, namely, "our flesh;" and we are to make this love of ourselves the measure of our love to those around us. What we really are to

* P. 271, elsewhere, as page 298, our author expresses himself with more discretion, and admits what sufficiently refutes the sophism above quoted. This reasoning, if sound at all, is as applicable to Adam in Paradise, as to Adam out of it. How could man have been formed to love himself and to enjoy the creatures innocently, if the being of a God makes it an act of injustice to love any thing but him?

to hate, is, neither our bodies, nor our souls, nor the bodies or souls of our neighbours: but simply the *evil* that dwelleth in ourselves, and in them.

In how different a tone does the same mind express itself when, softened by the recent death of his venerated father, and forgetting at once the mystic, and the logician, Pascal speaks as a man, and a Christian. Let the reader turn from the passages just quoted, to the Thoughts on death, Chap. xxii. Nor is this the only place, far from it, in which this eminent writer gives utterance to the sentiments of a profound, unaffected, and unsophisticated piety. Such passages, and they are many, have rendered the "Thoughts" a favourite book with all persons of kindred temper. But we are approaching that part of our subject which we have thought it convenient to separate from the consideration of our author's general views of human nature.

III. We come then to say something further than what has just now been advanced, concerning Pascal's style of Devotional Sentiment. The greater number, no doubt, of those with whom he has been a favourite writer, have regarded him in this point of view, rather than as a reasoner in behalf of Christianity, on which ground modern writers are more likely to be had recourse to, who deal with the difficulties of the argument in that special form in which they are *now* felt to attach to the subject.

Pascal, as we have already said, stands clear, for the most part, from the entanglements of the illusive mysticism which so much disparages many romanist writers; and he must, in fact, appear to advantage in this respect, if compared with the choicest of them.

His piety is straight forward, intellegible, practical; and, in a word, it is the sentiment of an elevated mind, awakened, after it had attained its maturity, to a consciousness of spiritual objects; and of one, moreover, who, throughout his course, was so hardly and heavily pressed with bodily sufferings, as to keep him free from excessive refinements, as well as from dry or airy speculations. Pascal's piety is the strong, yet tranquil working of a soul always held near to reality, by that effective teacher of truth, and that stern mistress of sobriety—Pain. He had found the need of solid consolation, and had felt, what he expresses, that—"There is *no consolation*, but in Truth;" and this feeling gave him a distaste, not merely of what he might discern to be false, though pleasing, but of whatever might be, on any account, questioned, or which would not bear the most searching examination. All the powers of his penetrating intellect he employed in sifting those elements, whence he might derive a consolation that "maketh not ashamed." Others have put their inventive faculties on the stretch to bring forward something from the depths, or from the heights, wherewith to nourish a dreaming enthusiasm. Pascal found enough, in the simplest and most solemn truths, to engage his heart, and to sustain his fortitude.

Put in comparison with Augustin, as the latter appears in his Confessions, Pascal has not less pathos, nor less genuine elevation; while he avoids altogether those incongruous mixtures of metaphysical speculation with devout feeling, which render the Confessions a jumble of piety and subtility, wherein David and Plato, Paul and Aristotle, are heard con-

fusedly talking together. By the side of Ephrem the Syrian, Pascal is more natural; and a brighter evangelic beam shines upon the path he treads; nor is the reader ever discouraged by the suspicion of an unavowed purpose, besetting us in the perusal of the ascetic writers, one and all—that, namely, of holding up and of glorifying the monkish institution, in the credit of which the interests of its members and chiefs was implicated. Again; if less pithy and ingenious than Macarius, the Egyptian, he exhibits, in such a comparison, the great benefit which even the romish community had derived from the storms of the reformation, in clearing the church atmosphere of its miasmas. How sincere soever might have been the piety of some of the ascetics, the garments of these good men are strongly scented with the effluvia of the "dead men's bones, and all corruption," that belonged to the sepulchres, not always "whited sepulchres," which they inhabited.

Pascal should not be measured against that ethereal spirit—Thomas à Kempis, who, by a life-long exercise in the celestial path, and by the utter renunciation of every object, pursuit, and idea, but that of following "the Shepherd's steps," had become a proficient of the first order, in his class. Yet even here our Pascal possesses an advantage, in as much as the atmosphere he breathed was warmer than that which surrounded the cloistered author of the De Imitatione. If Pascal could but have fairly compared himself with some of the choicest of his own communion, and could have traced the difference, all in his own favour as it was, up to its real source, he must have confessed that, through indirect channels,

he owed not a little to the very heretics whose names he is almost afraid to utter;*—a debt this which, released long ago from the thraldom of his earthly rejudices, he has had opportunity to acknowledge, in that place of peace, where he has met his brethren in Christ, the leaders of the Reformation.

What is it, we might ask, that has made the vast and striking difference which presents itself in turning from the devotional pages of Pascal, to those, for example, of St. Bernard, where, along with impressive, elevated, and Christian-like strains of piety, the reader is repulsed by shocking superstitions, by indications of a disguised ecclesiastical ambition, and by the smothered pride of the ascetic? Why does not Pascal, like the Abbot of Clairvaux,† spend his ingenuity, and recommend his eloquence, in dressing up tawdry garlands for the "Queen of Heaven"? or why does he not, in the empassioned tone of a lover, and in the extravagant phrases of a courtier, invoke "Mary, the virgin princess of Angels and Archangels!" If Pascal did nothing of this sort, it was not because his church had taught him better; or had, as a church, admitted any kind of reform, or had disowned and condemned these enormities of her middle-ages saints; for, on the contrary, she had striven hard to keep them agoing, after the world had cried shame of them. But in fact, in the times of Pascal, all sincere and

* See Les Provinciales; Lett. xvi.

† How lamentably do some of our modern restorers of "ancient catholicism" fall short of the thorough-going piety of St. Bernard! Hear him—In te (Maria) enim angeli lætitiam, justi gratiam, *peccatores veniam*, inveniunt in æternum! and again: In periculis, in angustis, in rebus dubiis, Mariam cogita, *Mariam invoca*. Non recedat ab ore; non recedat à corde! Whole pages equally edifying, or more so, might easily be quoted. But alas for St. Bernard! how feebly do even the most "catholic" among us tread in his steps!

sane minds, within the romish pale—all but the spiritually debauched, had tacitly admitted a certain element of the reformation, which, while it allowed them to remain within that communion, wrought in them an abhorrence, and an avoidance of its worst corruptions. And what might not have been effected within the morass of popery by the occult operation of this same under current, had the streams continued to flow with a cleansing force and clearness. But the waters of the Reformation, almost immediately becoming turbid, ceased, after the first gush, to carry health at large, to the nations.

But how acceptable soever Pascal's profound devotional sentiments may be to the pious reader, he will probably feel as if still a something were wanting to bring these sentiments intimately home to his *protestant* notions of evangelical piety. Let this be granted; and when it is granted, let the significant fact be adverted to—That, as often as we move from the narrow ground of our own times and community, as often as we, so to speak, change climate in Christianity, and put ourselves under another aspect of the heavens, we become conscious of a difference, which at the first, at least, we pronounce to be a difference for the worse. The temperature of the foreign region is not what our spiritual sensations accord with: the conventional style is not the same:—it is the same gospel we are looking at, but seen at a different angle.

With most pious persons it happens, when they may have chanced thus to set foot upon a foreign soil of Christianity, that they hasten homeward, tightened rather than loosened in their predilections,

Be it so;—the many, we must allow, are more safe in a strict adherence to the religious usages of their minds, than they could be in admitting any, even the slightest modifications of them. But it should be otherwise with those, and surely they are more than a few, whose habit it is to think and compare, and who dare to bring every principle they hold, and every practice they conform to, under scrutiny. Such then will be forward to confess that the Christianity of their particular times, and country, and communion, is at the best—only a particular style of the universal Truth;—a phase of the absolute brightness—a mode of the unchanging perfection. The Christianity of the New Testament is one; but has the Christianity of *any* body of men, since the apostolic times, been *that one*, and neither more nor less? Christianity, look for it where or when we may, is a something more, and a something less than the simple truth, embodied in the apostolic writings.

There are those who, while they would be shocked to affirm of any individual Christian, that he held, and held forth, and realized, the Truth, without alloy or defect, yet cherish a silent persuasion, concerning the particular form of it to which they are attached, that it is (or is within a *very little* of being) the absolutely True; and their persuasion goes someway beyond the sober belief that *among* various styles of Christianity, their own, taken as a whole, is to be preferred. Now one of the consequences of harbouring any such fond supposition, is not simply the fostering an exclusive temper, likely to degenerate into sheer uncharitableness, but the shutting ourselves out from the signal benefits to be derived

from a free communion with the pious—the true church, of all times and countries. The Christian, enfeebled by this sort of sensibility of the spiritual appetite, can eat of no loaf that has not been baked in his own oven:—the slightest peculiarity of flavour, even in the most wholesome food, gives him a suspicion of poison, and a nausea; and his spiritual condition is precisely analagous to that of some pitiable hypochondriacs, who can never travel without the attendance of their own cook, without a supply of water from their own spring, or without their own bed and linen—in a word, a caravan equipment.

But can we wish, for ourselves, to be trained in this sort of hyper-delicacy? If not, and the more effectually to get rid of it, we should (to return to our figure) use ourselves to as much travelling as we can afford; that is to say, in plain terms, make ourselves conversant with the piety of the Christians of other times and countries. Even if it were true that we may always be supplied from our home circle with enough of what is edifying; and with more than hitherto we have made good use of, still are we not exempted from the obligation (if we would be substantially wise) of looking wider for our spiritual nourishment; and if indeed the aliment be intrinsically wholesome, the farther it has come, in reaching us, the better.

The benefits are great of thus going abroad for our religious reading. At the first, we distaste the foreign article, but after a while we confess the good it has done us. Those who think themselves to be gifted, or who in fact are gifted, with the requisite

intelligence and discretion, and are not so unstable in mind as to be liable to be presently moved from their firmest convictions, will not fail to derive a marked invigoration of their religious feelings, as well as a happy expansion of their Christian sympathies, from the practice of going far and wide in their devotional and theological reading. How small soever may be the portion of time which can be allotted, daily, to such means of improvement, let the rule be to spend it, not in the company of the writers of our own age, country, and sect; but rather with such as may come to hand from remote times and places, and from other communions.

In compliance with this rule (if it be a good one) many of the romanist devotional writers may be read with advantage; and if we would wish for one to lead the way in this field, Pascal is the very writer in whose company we shall feel the least strange: and who, in the easiest manner, will introduce us to the circle of his associates. Are we afraid of popery?—those only need admit this fear whose minds are already in a thraldom which is essentially popish.

IV. Pascal does not, in this collection of his Thoughts, present himself, formally, in the character of a theologian. The Thoughts, many of them, are argumentative; but few of them polemical. It may however be useful to the reader to prepare him to see, in a true light, that aspect of Christian theology in which Pascal, and a host of excellent writers besides, out of the pale of the Lutheran reformation, have regarded the scheme of salvation.

Nothing less than a habit of extensive reading, or

we should better say, of reading *in all directions*, will make it easy for us to place ourselves in a position whence we may candidly and correctly estimate the doctrinal principles of writers, either anterior to the Lutheran reformation, or not participating in its spirit. A certain phraseology, a certain intentness and explicitness, in reference to a single point of Christian belief; a peculiar animation, the product of a momentous and eager controversy, have attached, more or less, to all protestant divines, and especially to those among ourselves who rank with what is termed, the evangelical school. Now it must be granted that, whatever importance we may attribute either to the doctrine maintained by the reformers against Rome, or to the particular phrases which have been authenticated as the best for conveying that doctrine, it is one thing to have opposed a particular truth, when directly affirmed in our hearing; and another thing not to fall in with the terms of it, because we have not come into collision with the argument concerning it. Thus, to take another instance, the rule and the test of orthodoxy, in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, which we may apply to writers contemporary with the arian controversy, ought not, in equity, to be applied to the ante-nicene Fathers.—Certain points, however important they were found to be, on inquiry, not having been formally argued, the modes of expression current, were more vague, and far more susceptible of an ambiguous rendering. It is controversy that fixes the usage of theological language; as well as actually compels men, individually, to wheel to the right, or left, and to choose their party.

Now our Pascal speaks of salvation by Christ, not

precisely as Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Jewel, have taught Protestants to speak of it, and which mode or style, is not so altogether simple and spontaneous, as it is polemical. Nevertheless he speaks of it—of redemption, and of the Redeemer, and of the mode of our reconciliation with God, just as we find the same momentous truths expressed by the Greek christian writers, one and all, from Polycarp to Chrysostom. Did these good men allow it to be supposed that there was salvation in any other name than in that of Christ? or did they scruple to affirm that this salvation was effected by his offering himself up, "the just for the unjust?" Is the name of the Saviour, as the only hope of guilty man, and as the gracious Shepherd of souls, seldom on their lips? By no means. But they none of them use (nor does Pascal) that precise controversial style in speaking of justification, or observe that *polemical precision*, which has come to be considered in certain quarters as the criterion of soundness in the faith.

And yet, could but the most jealous stickler for evangelical accuracy read the "Thoughts on death," particularly the passages referred to in the margin,* or the "Prayer for Grace in Sickness," not knowing whence they came, and uninformed of the fatal circumstance, that these breathings issued from papistical lips;—could such a reader doubt the spirituality of the author? This we must assume to be impossible; and if so, then we also assume it as certain that there are more styles than one of that piety which is conveyed to the hearts of men by "one and the same Spirit:"—It must then be an impiety to dis-

* Pages 293–4; and chapter xxiii, throughout.

allow any of the species or varieties of the grace so imparted; nor is it any thing less than to limit the divine operations.

"Justification by faith," to quote an excellent writer, "or that free forgiveness which is offered, without our deservings, through the righteousness of Christ, has, we all know, been styled by a great authority, the articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ. But, profoundly important and absolutely essential as this great doctrine is, still, it may be questioned whether its rank, comparatively with other doctrines, is not higher in the scale of Protestantism, than in that of the scripture revelation generally; whether, in other words, it does not occupy a more prominent part in the system of Christianity as opposed to popery, than in the system of Christianity considered in itself."*

It does not appear that Pascal had, in any instance, directed the forces of his mind toward theological questions, as such:—he took things as he found them among the better class of romanist divines. It is thus that he states in rather crude terms,† the doctrine of original sin; and if he affirms nothing more than what might be made good by quotations from Augustin or from some modern writers, he surely goes beyond what can be sustained by fair usage of Scripture. But then, again, he perplexes the partisans of any school; for if, on one page, he falls in with the Westminster Confession, on the next, perhaps, he is found no better than a sheer Arminian.‡ Nevertheless, whether Calvinist, or Arminian, or neither,

* Woodward's Thoughts, Essays, and Sermons.
† Page, 140. ‡ Page 186.

he speaks as one who has been "taught from above," and who knows how to build on "the sure foundation."* The time, let it be hoped, is coming on, in which less solicitude will be felt concerning the theological dialect of parties, or of individuals; and when far more importance will be attached to what are the unquestionable and the palpable evidences of spirituality. It was thus in the primitive age, when, whoever lived a christian life, and was faithful to the death, was accounted a Christian; but it ceased to be so after the time when all minds had been throughly heated and distorted by furious and wordy controversies.

V. We have, in the last place, to speak of Pascal's Thoughts as embodying an argument for Religion in general; and for Christianity, as well as for Jansenism, and for Romanism.

Looking simply at the relative bulk of the several parts of this collection, the argumentative portion is the larger, or at least it amounts to a full half of the whole. Those of the Thoughts which, in the present translation, stand foremost, constitute a regular, although it may seem a broken chain of reasoning, in the course of which a gradual development of consecutive propositions is effected, such as might be imagined actually to have been elicited by an intelligent and candid mind, honestly inquiring for truth, and starting from principles questioned by few. These Thoughts offer a sort of ratiocinative soliloquy, sometimes running into the form of a dialogue, and (a fact which the reader should be apprised of, and should bear in mind) sometimes propounding, without notice,

* Pages 218, 219.

the probable objections of an opponent, which are to meet their reply in the next paragraph. A very unfair advantage has been taken, by some of Pascal's commentators, of this mode of presenting his argument; and which, no doubt, he would have set clear of any possible ambiguity, had he lived to digest his materials.

The utility and merit of treatises in defence of religion generally, or specifically of Christianity, must be held to hinge on the previous question—To what class of persons is the argument addressed?—to *Assailants*, who are to be driven from their ground; or to *Inquirers*, who desire to be informed and confirmed. It would have been well if these very distinct purposes, which demand to be pursued each in the mode and spirit proper to it, had always been kept apart by Christian apologists. There seems some reason to believe that the slight, and often ambiguous effect produced by the ablest works of this kind, upon the minds of the persons for whose benefit they are intended, is to be accounted for mainly on this ground —that a mixture of incongruous arguments has been admitted into them; the writers, on one page, encountering the perverse, obdurate, and flippant *disbeliever*, and on the next, addressing himself to those who ask for nothing but to have the question fairly and calmly set forth, and cleared of the difficulties which, in their view, surround it. An argument may be such that, while it fails to confound the scoffer, it may be so much more than enough for simply informing the inquirer, that it rather alarms and perplexes him. Meantime those just and calm representations which, though not severely conclusive, would satisfy and

gladden a candid temper, furnish only occasions of triumph to the virulent sophist, who is not to be silenced but by the most severe and condensed reasoning.

In fact there are hardly to be found two classes of minds more dissimilar in their intellectual and moral characteristics, than the two, now referred to, and which have often been treated as one and the same, by those who have undertaken to deal with infidelity. The ill consequences of this want of discrimination, on the part of many of our apologists, has perhaps been of small account in relation to those whose infidelity, springing from impulses not at all connected with reason, is not to be removed by argument. Such persons may be silenced for an hour; but they are never convinced by that which is enough to convince them. But as to those who, in fact, should be chiefly if not exclusively kept in view by Christian apologists, these, conscious as they are of a willingness —nay perhaps, an intense anxiety to be relieved of their doubts, and yet finding themselves treated as opponents, if not enemies, have either mournfully turned away from their unfriendly guide, or have given indulgence to a reciprocal feeling of resentment, of which in the end, the Christian system itself, and all its professors, have come to be the objects.

Pascal's strain of argument for religion, and for Christianity, ought, in the main, to be considered as addressed to minds of the last named class;* that is to say, to persons occupying the position in which he himself had stood, when, having been profoundly affected by religious considerations, he had looked

* Page 366.

about for *reasons*, *corroborative* of the principles which already, though vaguely apprehended, had obtained a decisive influence over him. The author seems, in fact, to be retracing his own path, and to be formally stating the considerations or the general proofs, which had presented themselves to his own mind in working his way onward toward a full and cordial acceptance of the hope of the gospel; and to persons in a like state of mind, these Thoughts can hardly fail to be highly acceptable.

The Christian revelation, while, as to its external form, it is a communication of facts previously unknown, is, as to its *substance*, a fresh conveyance to mankind of the lost elements of moral and spiritual well-being. Now, while mere reasoning may suffice to put beyond all reasonable doubt the *facts* affirmed in the Scriptures, much more than any process of reasoning can supply, is needed to bring any human mind into the position in which the *substance* of the Christian revelation can be apprehended: and yet it is alone from such an apprehension of these moral and spiritual rudiments, that an efficacious or steady belief even of the facts of Christianity can arise. A belief in these facts is an opinion, coming and going, like the gleams of a showery day; but not beaming, with any power, upon the character or conduct:—nothing is ripened by any such variable influence.

But the belief that attends, or that springs from a perception of the moral and spiritual elements of the gospel scheme—a belief animated by a discernment of the divine perfection of our Lord's character, constitutes altogether another sort of mental condition, and is as unlike the other, as our waking

impressions are unlike our dreams. The seeming paradox is therefore substantially true, that the Christian system must already have been admitted, as real and divine, before the main part of its evidence, or the more convincing portion of it, can have been understood.*

The most irreligious minds have, at all times, dimly discerned the moral splendour of the gospel; just as we are conscious of the presence of the sun above the horizon, in a cloudy day; and such minds, moreover, have admitted the wisdom and excellence of single points of the Christian ethics; just as the blind are pleased when, from a collection of rare and beautiful objects, this and that article, a stalactite, a nautilus, a gem, is put into their hands: "Ah, how fine is this," say they; but what know they of the wonders of the museum, as it offers its ten thousand specimens to those who have eyes?

A genuine history of conversions from infidelity would, we believe, confirm our principle, that, in all such cases, a vital change, by whatever means effected, has first put the intellect in a new position; as well as altered the temperament of the soul; and that then, the argumentative evidence, which never disappoints those who ingenuously give it their attention, has made them rationally, as well as spiritually, believers. It is well that there should be treatises (consise and dense always) to which, when occasion demands, infidels may be referred, and which they may be boldly challenged to refute. But we want works of a very different sort to meet the case of those who are to be treated as having already taken their position on the side of truth.

* Page 365.

Pascal's Thoughts (the portion now spoken of) come under the latter, rather than the former description. Had they been of the kind to stop the mouth of the gainsayer, or to chastise his arrogance and flippancy, neither Voltaire nor Condorcet, we may be assured, would have given them to the world with their annotations. The reader, then, should look only for what he will actually find—namely, *considerations*, not condensed proofs. In our own sifting times the Christian evidences have been analysed, and brought into a state of argumentative perfection, which leaves Pascal's mode of treating them in the rear; that is to say, if we are in quest of irrefragable logic. Yet it is true that minds seeking rather for general views of the subject, than for the severity of proof, may, with peculiar advantage, take him as their guide.

A general scheme of the author's argument in behalf of Christianity, as sketched by himself in a long conversation with his friends, and of which notes were taken soon afterwards, has been prefixed to the Thoughts by the French editors. But a concise statement, to the same purport, constitutes the 11th chapter of the present edition, and to this the reader is referred, as being, in fact, a proper introduction to the whole of the *argumentative* portion of the Thoughts. The intelligent reader will not need more than he there finds, for opening to him the plan which the author would have fully developed, had he lived to prepare his Thoughts for the press.

If, once and again, the English reader thinks that he recognises in these pages certain views of the

evidences, not new to him, and which he may even remember to have seen more fully expounded elsewhere; he should, in mere justice to our author, be reminded, that Pascal was in fact the first modern writer to suggest some very striking and convincing considerations, which others, and especially those of our own country, have caught up, elaborated, and presented in a still more advantageous manner. Pascal has set in a new light, or was the first to discern, some of those nicer characteristics of historical and moral truth which the acumen, and the fine moral feeling of the modern European mind fits it to appreciate. The early Christian apologists have indeed anticipated most of the prominent proofs of the truth of Christianity; but there are other proofs, not at all less conclusive, although of a refined and occult kind, which it required the intelligence of later times to discover. Neither Porphyry, nor Celsus, nor their contemporaries, could have been made to comprehend, even if Origen himself had perceived them, those delicate, yet infallible marks of genuineness in the gospel history, and in the Epistles, which, to modern minds, constitute the irrefragable part of the argument.

One might take, as an instance, a thought propounded in a very broken manner by Pascal, but which has been adopted, and much insisted upon, by later writers. What we mean is the indirect argument in proof of the reality of our Lord's statements concerning the invisible world, and the vast movements of the Divine government, resulting from the ease, simplicity, and nativeness (naïvete) of his manner, when touching upon these superhuman subjects. "An artisan or labourer who speaks of the wealth

he has never touched or seen, a lawyer who talks of battles, or a private man who describes the state of kings, is wont to speak in terms of exaggeration, or of wonder, or of constraint; whereas the wealthy talk of the disposal of large sums, with indifference, and in a common style; the general describes a siege coolly and simply; and a king enters upon the interests of an empire, just as a private person does upon the most ordinary affairs. And thus it is that Jesus Christ speaks of the things of God, and of eternity." To feel the full force of this argument, or consideration, one should be well aware of the style of those, whether Jewish prophets, or Grecian sages, who, heretofore, had taken up kindred topics. Our Lord's manner, in every such instance, was precisely what was *natural*, and what became him who, having "been with the Father from before the foundation of the world," had lately descended to hold converse with man, concerning the things which he had seen and known.

In meeting then, in Pascal, with thoughts of this sort, some of them perhaps, hastily and incompletely expressed, let not the reader think slightingly of them, as having found the same better stated elsewhere; but rather remember that Pascal's Thoughts have now, for a hundred years and more, been carried hither and thither; and that the collection has been a seed-book, which has stocked the fields of our English Christian literature with fruitfulness and beauty.

Moreover, some few of the Thoughts, in this portion of the work, may, at the first, startle the reader, who perhaps will be ready to reject them as

paradoxical, exaggerated, or absolutely false. But in most such instances, if what is roughly thrown out in one place, be collated with analogous passages elsewhere occurring, a clue will be furnished for discovering those modifications, or connecting statements, which were present to the writer's mind, and apart from which he would never have given such passages to the world. Many things also are advanced peremptorily, which must be received with limitations or exceptions, as thus—"Charity is the one and only thing aimed at in Scripture; and whatsoever therein found does not tend directly to this end, is to be accounted figurative; for inasmuch as there is but one (ultimate) end or intention, all that, in plain terms, does not point that way, is figure."* This may be true, roundly stated, or very generally understood; but if assumed as *a rule of interpretation*, it would carry us as far from sober truth as the Rabbins, or as Origen and some of the Fathers have gone, in allegory; and would turn the history of real events—the story of battles and conspiracies, into something as airy as Bunyan's Holy War.

Pascal, as we have already said, although perfectly sincere in his profession of romanism, took a position in relation to those corruptions that are properly popish, such as places him *toward* protestantism; and, a few incidental phrases excepted, it might not be easily guessed that he was not such in fact. It is only as occasion offers that he comes forward, as the apologist of the Romish church; and it is due to him—to his friends of Port Royal, and to many of the best of men who have lived and died within its

* Page 179.

pale, to place ourselves, for a moment, in that point of view whence they were accustomed to look abroad over Christendom. It is not difficult to gather, either from the explicit arguments, or from the casual phrases employed by writers of the class to which Pascal belonged, the general principles or axioms, which, when once admitted as unquestionable, secured their submission to the church, notwithstanding their knowledge of her flagrant corruptious and gross superstitions.

Resting chiefly upon the purport of our Lord's last conversations with his disciples, as recorded by St. John, and which may fairly be assumed as intended, in a peculiar manner, to embody the first principles of the institute he was then consigning to their hands, the good men now referred to, gathered what they might well consider as the prime and constant characteristics of the true church, namely, union, uniformity of worship, agreement in opinion, and continuity, or a perpetuated, unbroken transmission, from age to age, of the doctrine and the institutions of the gospel.

Now although it may be very easy to invalidate, in detail, the claims advanced by the Church of Rome to these characteristics, and to show, that her boasted union has been that only of a civil despotism —that her uniformity, so far as it has been maintained, has been the product of terror and cruelty; and that the scheme of religion she has transmitted has been, not the apostolic doctrine, and worship, but a mass of later inventions;—notwithstanding these just exceptions, which we protestants take against the pretensions of Rome; yet it must be

granted, that she possesses—or that at least she can make a show of possessing, what, in some tolerable degree, answers to the above named characteristics. Of whatever sort it may have been, and by whatever unholy means secured, the Church of Rome has actually held up, before the world, the imposing spectacle of a widely extended polity, united under one head—adhering, in all lands, to the same worship, and to the same ecclesiastical constitution, and flowing down, from age to age, without any such violent or conspicuous interruptions, as could be held to destroy the identity of the system. The romanist could always say, "*We* are one church: we have one head, one faith, and the same sacraments; and what we are now, is what those were from whom we derived one spiritual existence: *we* have not innovated, *we* have not revolted."*

This view of their position, even considered by itself, could not but strongly influence serious minds: and then, with what was it contrasted? The first and broad characteristic of the Reformation—the mark which it carried with it into every country, was —not ecclesiastical revolt merely, in relation to Rome, but internal variance—disunion, and innovation, or novelty. But were not these the very tokens of error—the symbols of antichrist? Could it be necessary to inquire any further concerning the pretension of those who were seen to be waging a bitter and fierce warfare among themselves? Thus Pascal, and Fenelon, and many others, have looked at the question between the Romish Church, and her assailants: and although they ought to have gone more

* Page 283.

deeply into this question, and to have reached its real merits, they felt, as men fearing God, satisfied that they stood on the *safer side* of the great modern schism; and that, even if the Church might cover some abuses, she was THE CHURCH still; and the sole mistress or dispensatrix of eternal life.

Not only have views, such as these, retained good and enlightened men of the past age in allegiance to Rome; but they still produce the same effects, and must continue to secure for her the vitalising support of many conscientious persons, throughout Europe, until protestantism, or, let us rather say, until the Christianity of the New Testament, shall have approved itself to the world by exhibiting the genuine characteristics of union, uniformity, or unanimity, and perpetuity. Then shall all men flock toward the church, when they know, without a question, where to find it!

A very useful lesson may be gathered in following a mind, like Pascal's, on those particular occasions when, overruled, or, we might say, overawed, by an assumed axiom, it comes to regard the plainest matters of fact altogether in a false light. We may be ready to wonder that one so well informed as was Pascal, and so clear-sighted, could have blinded himself to the true state of the case regarding the Romish auricular confession. "Can one imagine," says he, "anything more kind, more tender, than the practice of the church (in directing us to unburden our consciences to the priest, and to him alone)? Nevertheless, such is the depravity of the human mind, that it thinks even this benign law hard; and in fact, this has been one

of the principal reasons of the revolt of a great part of Europe against the church."

Pascal, who was conversant with the ecclesiastical history of Spain—to say no more, had he not come to the knowledge of the unutterable abominations connected with the confessional in that country? or could he think that these abuses, everywhere prevalent, as they were, and in some countries reaching the extreme point of atrocity, could he think them incidental only, or that the evils inseparable from the practice were yet outweighed by its beneficial consequences? No:—he could not have made good any one of these suppositions; but, at all events, auricular confession was an inseparable part of the Romish system; and to question its expediency would have been to stand out, declared, as a heretic. He scorned to shelter himself in mere silence; and therefore breaks through every check of reason, not to say of truth, boldly to defend what, although indefensible, could not be disclaimed.

As a matter of history, every one knows, that it was not confession, but the confessional;—not the abstract usage, or principle; but the universal and invariable abuse of it, that roused the indignation of northern Europe, and put into the hands of the Reformers one of the most efficacious of those weapons with which they demolished the papal edifice, in their several countries.

It would be easy to dispose, in a similar manner, of all those passages wherein Pascal explicitly vindicates the practices of the Romish Church; but it cannot be necessary to do so: his personal adherence to that church is a matter, as of no perplexity, so of

no general importance: he advances nothing in behalf of its errors that is new, or that has not been, a hundred times, met by irrefragable argument; meantime, as we have said, the main stress of his mind presses *against* the *spirit* of the Romish Church; nor is he a writer whom modern romanists can be fond of adducing, as an authority on their side. Take this specimen of Pascal's *feeling* in relation to the sacramental question, a question which, in fact, condenses within itself the elements of the great and ancient controversy between superstition and christianity: and which, in its modern form, is the pivot of the polemics of our day.

"The Jews were of two parties—the one having the sentiments only of the heathen world:—the other possessing the feelings of Christians (essentially so). The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, was to be a great secular prince; and according to the carnal Christians he has come to release us from the obligation of loving God, and to bestow upon us sacraments, which work every thing for us, apart from our concurrence. But neither was the one true Judaism, nor is the other true Christianity. The real Jews, and the real Christians, have acknowledged a Messiah, who should make them love God; and by the means of this love, triumph over their enemies."*

This passage expresses as well, and as concisely perhaps, as it could be expressed, the vital distinction which, in all ages, has divided the professedly Christian world. Whoever takes his part with the secular minded Jew, attaches himself to a system

* Page 166–7.

obsolete, corruptible, and evanescent. But concerning those who "hold to the spirit," we need hardly ask whether, in, and by the world, they be called papists or protestants; for they are of that kingdom that "shall not be shaken," and they are those who, in the end, shall be knit together as members of the true church.

Firm in this great and first principle, Pascal too readily admitted some positions which his acute and logical mind must instantly have rejected, had he chosen to bring them under examination. Thus, for instance, he so lays down the conditions of an authentic miracle, as shall save ample space for all the lying wonders of the romish romancers—"When a miracle," says he, "is witnessed, one ought either to yield to it (admit its reality) or be able to adduce extraordinary reasons to the contrary:—one should ask, whether he who performs it denies the being of a God, denies Jesus Christ, or denies the Church?* Now we might be very content to let this rule pass without comment, if only a due care were always given to the determination of the previous, and very pertinent question—Is such or such an alleged miracle, a miracle indeed? The exercise of this necessary and reasonable discretion would, in fact, supersede Pascal's rule, inasmuch as the few instances, remaining, after such a scrutiny has been made, would, all of them, be on the side of truth, and would all range around the apostolic history. But Pascal had, as a romanist, to look to innumerable miracles beside those wrought in the first age of the church; and among the number, to that of the "Holy Thorn."†

* Page 221. † Page 237, and Chap. xx, throughout.

Were there not an inference of practical importance — an inference touching our own times, derivable from the fact, one should willingly draw a veil over the extreme credulity of so great a man: (we will not now speak of the cure itself in whatever way effected) we mean his credulity in regard to this boasted relic of Port Royal. Did he then know so little of the wholesale manufacture of, not "holy thorns" merely, but of true crosses—veritable nails—genuine rags, reeds, hammers, spikes, as well as of leg-bones, arm-bones, finger-joints, and what not? Did he know so little of this monkish craft, as to believe, without inquiry, in the genuineness of the Port Royal "holy thorn." And must we yield an indulgence to Pascal, the geometrician, of the 17th century, which we do not grant, without reluctance, to the benighted St. Louis of the 13th century? One might have thought that the author of the tract on the properties of the cycloid, would have left "holy thorns," to be the play-things of the debauched and debilitated understandings of monks! But it is not so; meantime who shall calculate the damage thus done to the religious sentiments of mankind, by the like insanities of powerful minds? It has been thus that the entire influence of Pascal's religious writings in France has been turned aside, and his powerful thrust at impiety successfully parried by a contemptuous reference, on the part of his infidel commentators, to the childish superstitions to which he was accustomed to surrender himself. For example, Condorcet, in putting forward a foolish paper of abbreviated notes of Pascal's daily religious observances, and which was constantly

worn by him as a sort of amulet, stitched in his dress, insultingly exclaims—"What an interval between this paper and the treatise on the cycloid! Nothing in fact can better serve to explain how all the thoughts contained in this collection could have come from the same brain.—The author of the treatise on the cycloid wrote some; and the rest are the work of the author of the amulet."

So it is, and it must be confessed with some appearance of reason, however inequitably, that the whole weight of Pascal's testimony in favour of religion, is thrown out of the scale, and placed to the account of that infirmity of temper to which he gave way. Let good and eminent men be as absurd as they please in things which the world can never hear of; but let them remember that every absurdity of theirs which comes to be talked of, costs nothing less than the well-being of hundreds, or of thousands of souls! Expensive recreations truly, are the religious freaks and follies—the superstitions and the extravagancies, of the wise and good!

There are those around us, even now, who might derive a caution or two, of another kind, from this great man's example. Pascal—right in a general principle, but deplorably wrong in the application of it, believed himself compelled to deliver over to hopeless perdition, one and all, the very men whose memory we protestants love and honour, as the restorers of Christianity, and the emancipators of Europe. "The body can no more live," says he, "without the head, than the head without the body. Whoever then separates himself from the one, or the other, no longer belongs to the body, and has nothing

more to do with Jesus Christ. Neither all the virtues, nor martyrdom, nor any austerities, nor any good works, can be of the least utility *out of the pale of the Church*, and apart from the communion of the head of the Church, that is to say—the pope."*

How sad the consequences, as affecting his own charity and comfort as a Christian—how sad as affecting his influence in after times, was that artificial blindness which excluded from his view the unquestionable piety of many of the reformers, and of thousands of their followers? What has so often —nay in every age hitherto, of the Christian history, turned the best heads, and chilled the best hearts, has been the placing reliance upon that flimsy ecclesiastical logic which has made it appear that the great realities, for the very sake of which the Christian dispensation was given to men, namely—the active love of God, and of our neighbour, are of no account, apart from certain conditions, attaching to the medium of conveying this dispensation from hand to hand. As if, in visiting a people full-grown, fair, and ruddy, whom one found to subsist on the "finest of the wheat," one should sourly turn upon them, and say —'you delude yourselves, altogether, in fancying yourselves robust and happy:—these appearances of health are utterly fallacious: —you are, in fact, although you think it not, you are emaciated, squallid, and feeble.—You *must* be so, for the seed-corn wherewith, at the first, your fields were sown, was surreptitiously obtained from the royal granaries, and therefore *could not* produce a wholesome crop:—nay it is all virulent poison.'

* Page 247.

Such is the language that has been held by narrow minds to whoever has stood outside of their little enclosure! The ecclesiastical virulence of one age differs extremely little from that of another: All is the same, saving a phrase or two. "Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." So spake the staunch men of the apostolic age. "Out of the church, that is to say, not in allegiance to the pope; there is no salvation." So have spoken the successors and representatives of the Jewish zealots, from Gregory I, to the present day. "Deprived of Christ's sacraments, there can be no life in you; but Christ's sacraments are in the hands of Christ's ministers, and of none else; and his ministers are they whose canonical descent from the apostles, in the line of episcopal ordination, can be unequivocally traced:—the merest shadow of uncertainty in the matter, of ecclesiastical genealogy, is fatal to the pretensions of the holiest of men, or of any who may seem holy; for them, and the communities under their care, the abyss of perdition yawns wide." Thus, even now, is one half of the protestant world talked to by the other half!

But what must we think if, in the fine net-work of reasoning on which these anathemas hang, there should be some flaw!—some rotten thread! what if, in the historical materials out of which it is spun, some facts have been too hastily assumed!—What? why then these adventurous logicians have been coolly outraging Christian charity, they have been maligning thousands of Christ's faithful people, they have been poisoning the hearts of their followers, they have been heaping calumnies upon the

gospel itself, and so have turned multitudes of souls out of the path of truth, and all this has been done on the strength of a chain of syllogisms, which alas! happens, in some part of it, to want a link!

Many there are, unthought of by these zealots, who, with some honest anxiety, desiring to inform themselves concerning Christianity, stumble at the threshold, when they find that those of its adherents who stand the highest in rank and office, and who claim to be the only authorized interpreters of its mysteries, are inflamed by the spirit of cursing and bitterness, and that arrogance and jealousy are, the characteristics of their temper! The vague and suppressed feeling excited in thousands of ordinary minds, on such occasions, gets utterance through the lips of the crafty and politic enemies of all religion. We are unwilling here to quote Voltaire, at length; yet it might be useful (to some at least) to read and take home to themselves, the keen and just, although in the main sophistical comment, which he attaches to that passage of the Thoughts in which Pascal sums up his argument for Christianity;* an argument irrefragable, if the gospel be looked at abstractedly; or if the noiseless story of its genuine followers in every age, be regarded; but miserably contradicted by the general current of what is called church history;—the history of ecclesiastical arrogance.

Pascal's better nature triumphs, once and again, over his faulty church logic, when, happily, he forgets Rome, and the heretics. In the passage referred to in the margin, he lays down a great princi-

* Page 131-4

ple—a principle clear and inexpressibly momentous, and which in substance is this—That the manifest operation and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, producing the Christian graces in the hearts of men, must, *in all cases*, be acknowledged and allowed to authenticate, substantially, the institutions through which the Spirit has thus deigned to operate. To reject or to scorn the work of God, in renovating the souls of men, is, if not to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, at least to limit him, and to arrogate to ourselves the disposal of his sovereign favours!*

Nearly all that relates, in this collection, to the Jansenist and Port Royal controversies, is comprised in the passages referred to beneath;† nor do these passages demand any special remark;—they are *out* of the author's ordinary style—less calm, less logical, and such as, by themselves, would leave the reader in suspense, as to the merits of the controversy between the Jesuits and the Jansenists; or rather, would give him the impression that this controversy, like so many, evenly divided faults and merits. Yet this was not the fact, and a perusal of the story of the Port Royalists may almost be spoken of as an act of justice, due to those oppressed witnesses for the truth in France.

In England, Pascal's writings, and his Thoughts especially, have always been in favour among meditative and intelligent religious readers. But with us, whose religious literature is so ample and various, this single writer presents himself as one in a crowd:—we converse with him delighted, for an hour, and turn to another. In France which can

* Page 248. † Chap. xx.

hardly be said to possess a native religious literature, or at best a very limited classical indigenous divinity, Pascal is read much rather as an authenticated model of style, and as an acute and eloquent dialectician, than properly as a religious writer: there are not religious readers enough to maintain his celebrity in that character. His mind and his language are admired:—his principles utterly disregarded; at least it is generally so. Nor indeed can it be thought likely that, as a *religious* writer, he should regain his influence at home. The controversy in which he acquired his chief celebrity, was special and temporary; and if ever the Gallican church shall be anew agitated by theological debate, the questions then to be mooted will be of quite another sort;—neither St. Cyran, nor Jansen, nor St. Augustin will give their names to the quarrel. And as to the Thoughts, the greater portion of them, relating to the Christian evidences, are likely to be superseded (if ever the general subject awakens the French mind) by works produced at the spur of the occasion, adapted to modern modes of thinking, and squared by more exact and erudite methods of argumentation.

May that day of religious agitation in France soon come on! Nor must it be said that there are *no* indications of its near approach. We do not here allude to the silent diffusion of the Scriptures, which, it may be hoped, will produce, at length, a happy effect upon the middle and lower classes. Nor should we care to enquire particularly into the internal condition and prospects of the Reformed and Lutheran communions; inasmuch as many reasons, not now to be set forth, seem to render it highly improbable

that the religious renovation of France (if it is ever to take place) should burst out from the dying embers of protestantism.—The French people, we may be sure, will not take their religion from those who appear themselves to have so little to spare; or in fact from the descendants and representatives of the Hugunots.

There are however facts which warrant the belief that a stirring of life is even now taking place in the heart of the Gallican church:—inquiry is awake, and sedulous studies are pursued, such as must, or probably will, bring with them some change of the ecclesiastical position of the church, and some reforms. The French clergy of the present day, very unlike, as a body, the creatures of the revolution, and of Napoleon's church government, are reported to be men who will not leave themselves to be contemned, like their immediate predecessors, as the dregs of the people—persons who, for a morsel of bread, would do the dirty work of the state, in carrying forward the mummeries of the government superstition. Such, too generally, were the Bonaparte clergy; but such are not, if report speak truly of them, the clergy of the Gallican church at the present moment.

Feeling their destitution of a native theological literature, the clergy (as it appears) are eagerly demanding that of other countries, even not exclusive of some of our protestant commentaries. But especially are they recurring to the Greek and Latin Fathers—the accredited literature of the Romish church. The lately revived demand for the Fathers in *this* country, had already added a thirty per cent. to the commercial value of the best editions; and now,

a not less vivid anxiety, on the part of the French clergy, to possess them, has still further enhanced that value. Until of late, the tide of ecclesiastical literature set steadily from France and Germany, toward England, where a ready sale was obtained for the importations which drained the foreign shops and libraries. But at length this tide has turned, and many ponderous works—the Benedictine editions, and the like, after having seen the day and "taken the air," during a few years' sojourn in England, are finding their way again across the channel, and to Paris, where they meet purchasers, eager to possess them at a price which leaves a handsome profit in the hands of all who have been concerned in pushing them round in this circuit.

Nor is this all; for at a time when no such enterprise would be ventured upon in London, the Parisian press is issuing costly editions of the most voluminous of the Fathers—Chrysostom, and Augustin: —reprints of the noble labours of the congregation of St. Maur!

But it will be said, disdainfully or despondingly, "What of this? What will be the probable issue of a revived study of the Fathers in France, except it be to rivet popery anew upon the minds of the clergy? What are the Fathers but the authors and patrons of popery?" We look for a different and happier result of this return of ecclesiastical erudition. Taught by the course of controversies elsewhere, and of which they cannot be ignorant, to look out, as they read, for the distinction between the romish superstitions, and ancient Christianity, this distinction will meet them at every turn: it will (with

all its important consequences) be forced upon their notice; and even if, for a while, they are confirmed in their respect for so much of popery as belongs to ancient Christianity, they can hardly fail, in the end, to resent, with a fresh indignation (as the Gallican church has in fact heretofore resented) those impositions and corruptions which are attributable, not to the Fathers, but to the bishops of Rome, and in which popery—if we use the designation with any pertinence, really consists.

Our times are times of irresistible progression, in every path on which movement takes place at all. Ecclesiastical research, once set on foot (in France or elsewhere) once gone into with eagerness, and undertaken by men who are commencing their professional career, will not, as we venture to predict, come to a stand at any point of arbitrary limitation; but will go as far as it can go:—it will reach the real or natural boundary of the ground within which it is carried on. French science, French historical learning, are not now sleepy, inert, or superstitiously timid; but are bold, persevering, and exact. French ecclesiastical learning, reared in the same schools, will partake of the same spirit, and will hold a similar course:—it will pursue its objects, and will overtake them. And while, in this country, we are going round about, feeling our way in the dark, a very few competent to take their part in any such inquiries, and more deprecating them as pernicious or idle;—while, in England, we are very likely to reap only new embarrassments from our inadequate researches into Christian antiquity, it may be predicted, as a not improbable event, that the French ecclesiastical

scholars, less encumbered in fact than ourselves, less *beset*, and not distracted by the foresight of secular and political consequences, attached to these pursuits, may get fairly ahead of us, and become our masters. The Germans, as every body knows, have long since done so in whatever is purely erudite and critical—in whatever relates to the historical interpretation of the sacred text; and as, in times gone by, we have looked to the French ecclesiastical compilers and historians, as to the only men who were thoroughly conversant with the subject, so may we again have to go to our neighbours for the result of their independent and scholastic inquiries concerning the doctrine and polity of the early church.

To themselves, these inquiries, as they are not likely to be cut short, can hardly fail to be in the highest degree beneficial; and the probable consequences it might not be very difficult to anticipate. This however is a subject we must not here pursue. We might perhaps wish something else for the clergy of France than that they should give themselves to the painful perusal of the Greek and Latin divines. But He who "leadeth the blind, often, in a way that they know not," toward the fulness of truth, may be preparing, even now, happy changes for France, in this very path. Or should nothing further or better be the result, what protestant would not heartily rejoice to know that the superstitions of Gregory I, of Gregory VII, and of Gregory IX, were giving way, among our neighbours, to the superstitious Christianity, albeit, of Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Tertullian?

In connection with the topic here adverted to, a

consideration is suggessed by Pascal's usage (common to romanist writers) and which he adheres to, as well in his Thoughts, as in the Provincial Letters, of making all his quotations from Scripture in the latin of the Vulgate. Be it remembered that, when stating his reasons for adopting a lively and popular style, in the Provincial Letters, he plainly avows that he wished to gain the ear of the people at large; —of the unlearned and of women; and he felt that he should have failed in this object, had he written gravely and scholastically. We have his own confession then, that he wrote for all. But now to have allowed the *people*, through the medium of his pages, to have heard our Lord and his apostles speaking of salvation in the vernacular dialect, would have been tantamount to heresy: it would have been to countenance the abominations of Wickliffe, Luther, Calvin, Tindal. Pascal did not forget that the intention of that stupendous miracle which first declared the promised presence of the Spirit with the apostles, was to allow every man to hear "the words of life in the tongue in which he was born." But the Romish church had thought fit to contravene the Holy Ghost, and to reverse, by her decrees, the will of the ascended Saviour. The church therefore, not the Lord, the pope, not the Holy Ghost, man, not God, was to be obeyed; and here is one of the most enlightened and pious of romanists, yielding obedience to the impious restriction, and giving the sign of his approbation of the romish practice of denying the Scriptures to the people. Let it be so. Pascal and his contemporaries have long ago fulfilled their course. But how is this main

article of the romish despotism likely to be thought of in the present day, and when it comes to be seen broadly opposed to the authority and opinion of the Fathers, one and all? Men of vigorous minds, breathing the atmosphere of intellectual independence, when they come, in the course of their daily studies, to meet with proofs, fresh and pointed, of the *recentness*, as well as of the deliberate wickedness of the papal innovations, are surely not unlikely to conceive, and to cherish, a burning resentment against the usurpation altogether. May they not—we mean the intelligent and erudite French clergy, come to say, 'We will betake ourselves to ancient Christianity, and rid ourselves of the puerile superstitions, and the degrading ordinances of the middle ages?'

While, on the one hand, the Scriptures, whether the clergy will it or not, are creeping on in France, and are coming into all hands, they themselves are finding, on the pages of the authorised doctors of their church, the most strenuous exhortations, addressed to the people—to men and to women, to peruse the inspired writings. A volume of such passages might soon be gathered from those of the Fathers whom Rome herself has canonized. Or let the French clergy confine themselves, in this particular, to their own Hilary of Poictiers, who, in an age as enlightened and as pure surely as that of Innocent III and St. Dominic, lost no occasion on which to urge upon all the diligent study of Scripture. But should it once come to this, that the clergy grant that, what the Fathers, one and all, allow and recommend, and what the spirit of the times calls for, is no longer rightfully to be refused; our

neighbours may then think and say what they please of the English and German Reformers; so that they do but read the Bible themselves, and promote its circulation among their people.

Pascal himself, in a tract to which we have not as yet referred*—"a comparison between the Christians of the early ages, and those of the present times;" indicates the sense he had of the greatness of the changes that had come upon the professedly Christian world; and as, in relation to physical science, he held a clue which, if he had pursued it, would have brought him soon upon the solid ground, and the open field of modern philosophy, so in this tract, and elsewhere, he incidentally throws out a hint which, had he followed it up, would have set him clear of the errors of the papacy. France, if her Pascal did not, has trod even steps with England on the walks of science: may she soon do so, although he did not, on the path of heavenly truth!

* Page 318.

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LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Blaise Pascal was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, June 19, 1623. His father, Stephen Pascal, president in the Court of Aids, in that city, married Antoinette Begon, by whom he had four children—a son born in 1619, who died in infancy, Blaise, the subject of the present memoir, and two daughters, Gilberte, born in 1620, who was married to M. Perier, and Jacqueline, born in 1625, who took the veil in the Convent of Port Royal.

The family of Pascal had received a patent of nobility from Louis XI, about the year 1478, and from that period had held official situations of importance in Auvergne. Besides these hereditary advantages, Stephen Pascal was distinguished, not only for his legal knowledge, but for superior attainments in literature and science, combined with great simplicity of manners, and an exquisite relish for the calm and pure delights to be met with in the bosom of his family. The death of his amiable and excellent wife, Antoinette Begon, in 1626, a stroke most deeply felt, increased his interest in the education of his children, an object for which he had always been solicitous, but which, from that time, became paramount to every other. In order to pursue it, without distraction, he resigned his official situation,

in favour of his brother, and removed, in 1631, to Paris. Here he had free access to persons whose taste was congenial with his own, and enjoyed the amplest means of information from books and other sources. His principal attention was directed to his only son, who gave indications, almost from his cradle, of his future eminence; at the same time he instructed his daughters in the Latin language and general literature, studies which he looked upon as well adapted to produce a spirit of reflection, and to secure them from that frivolity which is the bane and reproach of either sex.

The famous thirty years' war at that time raged through Europe; but, amidst all its disasters, Eloquence and Poetry, which had flourished in Italy for more than a century, began to unfold their lustre in France and England; the severer sciences issued from the shades in which they had been enveloped; a sound philosophy, or rather a sound method of philosophising, made its way into the schools, and the revolution, which had been commenced by Galileo and Des Cartes, rapidly advanced. Stephen Pascal partook of the general impulse, and united himself with men of similar talents and pursuits, such as Mersenne, Roberval, Carcavi, Le Pailleur, and others, for the purpose of discussing philosophical subjects and of opening a correspondence with the promoters of science in France and other countries. To this association may be traced the origin of the Academy of Sciences established under royal authority in 1666.

Young Pascal sometimes joined in the scientific conversations held at his father's house. He listened to every thing with extreme attention, and eagerly

investigated the causes of whatever fell under his observation. It is said that at the age of eleven years, he composed a small treatise on Sounds, in which he endeavoured to explain why the sound made by striking a plate with a knife ceases on applying one's hand to it. His father, fearful that too keen a relish for the sciences would impede his progress in the languages, which were then considered the most important part of education, decided, in concert with his friends, to abstain from conversing on philosophical subjects in his presence. To pacify his son under this painful interdiction, his father promised that when he had acquired a complete knowledge of Greek and Latin, and was in other respects qualified, he should learn Geometry; only observing that it was the science of extension, or of the three dimensions of body length, breadth, and thickness—that it teaches how to form figures with accuracy, and to compare their relations, one with another. Slight as these hints were, they served as a ray of light to develop his genius for mathematics. From that moment his mind had no rest; he was eager to explore the mysteries of a science withheld from him with so much care. In his hours of recreation he shut himself up in a chamber, and with a piece of charcoal drew on the floor triangles, parallelograms, and circles, without even knowing the names of these figures; he examined the different positions of convergent lines, and their mutual relations. By degrees he arrived at the conclusion that the sum of the three angles of a triangle must be measured by a semi-circumference; or, in other words, are equal to two right angles, which is the 32d proposition of the 1st book

of Euclid. While meditating this theorem, he was surprised by his father, who, having learnt the object, progress, and result of his researches, stood for some time dumb with astonishment and delight, and then hastened, almost beside himself, to tell what he had witnessed to his intimate friend M. le Pailleur.

The young Pascal was now left at full liberty to study Geometry. The first book on the subject put into his hands, at twelve years old, was Euclid's Elements, which he understood at once, without the slightest assistance. He was soon able to take a distinguished station among men of science, and at sixteen composed a small tract on Conic Sections, which evinced extraordinary sagacity.

The happiness which Stephen Pascal enjoyed in witnessing the rapid progress of his son was for a short time interrupted by an unexpected event. In Dec. 1638, when the Government, whose resources had been impoverished by a succession of wars, made some reduction on the interest of the public debt, a measure which, though very easily adopted, excited great dissatisfaction among the proprietors, and occasioned meetings which were denounced as seditious. Stephen Pascal was accused as one of the most active on this occasion, which his having laid out the greatest part of his property in the purchase of shares rendered somewhat plausible. An order was issued for his arrest, but having received timely notice from a friend, he secreted himself, and withdrew into Auvergne. His recall was owing to the good offices of the Duchess d'Aiguillon, who prevailed on his daughter Jacqueline to perform a part in a

comedy before Cardinal Richelieu. On the Cardinal expressing his satisfaction with the performance, she presented him with a copy of verses applicable to her father's situation, on which Richelieu immediately procured his recall, and within two years made him Intendant of Rouen.

During Pascal's residence at Rouen, when scarcely nineteen years old, he invented the famous arithmetical machine which bears his name. It was two years before he brought it to a state of perfection, owing not merely to the difficulty he found in arranging and combining the several parts of the machinery; but to the unskilfulness of the workmen. Many attempts have since been made to simplify it, particularly by Leibnitz, but, on the whole, its advantages have not compensated for the inconvenience arising from its complexity and bulk.

Soon after this, he entered on a course of inquiry relative to the weight of the atmosphere, a subject which engaged the attention of all the philosophers of Europe. The venerable Galileo had opened the way to correct views of it, but left to his disciple Torricelli and others to establish the true explanation of the phenomena connected with this branch of physics. Pascal published an account of his Experiments, in a work entitled New Experiments relating to a Vacuum, in 1647. He wrote also two treatises on the equilibrium of fluids, and the weight of the atmosphere, which were first printed in 1663, the year after the Author's death. These tracts were succeeded by some others on geometrical subjects, none of which appear to have been preserved. We deeply regret that they were

not published at the same time as his other philosophical treatises, as they would have contributed to give us more accurate conceptions of the extent to which their Author pushed his researches. Besides this, the productions of a man of genius, though, owing to the advance of science, they may present nothing new, are always instructive from the exhibition they make of his mode of arranging his thoughts and reasonings. They are not to be valued so much, perhaps, for the actual knowledge they communicate, because in scientific researches there is a constant progression, and works of the highest order in one age are succeeded in the next by others more profound and complete. It is not so in matters of taste and imagination; and a tragedy which gives a vivid and correct representation of the passions common to mankind, will never become obsolete. The poet and the orator have also another advantage; they address, though a less select yet a far more numerous auditory, and their names speedily attain celebrity. Yet the glory of scientific discoveries appears more solid and impressive; the truths they develop circulate from age to age, a common good, not subject to the vicissitudes of language; and if their works no longer contribute to the instruction of posterity, they remain as monuments to mark the height to which the human mind had reached at the time of their appearance. Of Pascal's genius there remain memorials sufficient to place him in the first rank of mathematicians; such are the Arithmetical Triangle, his papers on the Doctrine of Chances, and his treatise on the Cycloid.

Intense application gradually undermined his health. Towards the end of the year 1647 he was

attacked for three months by a paralytic affection, which almost deprived him of the use of his limbs. Some time after he removed to Paris with his father and his sister Jacqueline. Whilst surrounded by his relations, he somewhat relaxed his studies, and made several excursions into Auvergne and other parts. But he had the misfortune to lose his father in 1651, and two years after his sister Jacqueline entered the Convent of Port Royal. His other sister and her husband, M. Perier, resided at a distance at Clermont. Thus left alone, he gave himself up to such excessive mental labour as would have soon brought him to the tomb. The failure of his bodily powers forced him to relax his studies, which his physicians had in vain advised. He therefore entered into society, and though his disposition was tinged with melancholy, always gave pleasure from his superior understanding, which accommodated itself to the various capacities of those he conversed with. He gradually acquired a relish for society, and even indulged thoughts of marriage, hoping that the attentions of an amiable and sensible companion would alleviate his sufferings and enliven his solitude; but an unexpected event changed all his projects. In the month of October, 1654, as he was one day taking his usual drive in a coach and four, and was passing over the bridge of Neuilly, the two leaders became ungovernable on a part of the bridge where there was no parapet, and plunged into the Seine. Happily the first shock of their descent broke the traces which connected them with the wheel horses, so that the coach stopped on the edge of the precipice. The concussion given to the feeble frame of Pascal may be easily conceived;

he fainted away, and a considerable time elapsed before he came to himself again. His nerves were so violently agitated, that in many of the sleepless nights which succeeded during the subsequent period of his life, he imagined that he saw a precipice by his bedside, into which he was in danger of falling. He regarded this event as an admonition from Heaven to break off all worldly engagements, and to live henceforward to God alone. His sister Jacqueline had already prepared him by her example and her conversation for adopting this resolution. He renounced the world entirely, and retained no connection but with friends who held similar principles. The regular life he led in his retirement gave some relief to his bodily sufferings, and at intervals a portion of tolerable health; and during this period he composed many works of a kind very different to those on scientific subjects, but which were new proofs of his genius, and of the wonderful facility with which his mind grasped every object presented to it.

The Convent of Port Royal, after a long interval of languor and relaxation, had risen to high reputation under the direction of Angelica Arnauld. This celebrated woman, desirous of augmenting the reputation of the establishment by all lawful means, had drawn arround her a number of persons distinguished for learning and piety, who, disgusted with the world, sought to enjoy in retirement the pleasures of reflection and Christian tranquillity. Such were the two brothers, Arnauld d'Andilli and Antoine Arnauld, Le Maître, and Saci, the translator of the Bible, Nicole, Lancelot, Hermant, and others. The principal occupation of these illustrious men was the

education of youth; it was in their school that Racine acquired a knowledge of the Classics, a taste for the great models of antiquity, and the principles of that harmonious and enchanting style, which places him on the summit of the French Parnassus. Pascal cultivated their acquaintance, and was soon on terms of the most familiar intimacy. Without making his fixed residence with them, he paid them, at intervals, visits of three or four months, and found in their society every thing that could instruct him —reason, eloquence, and devotion. On their part, they were not slow to apprehend the extent and profundity of his genius. Nothing appeared strange to him. The variety of his knowledge, and that fertility of invention which animated him, gave him the ability to express himself with intelligence, and to scatter new ideas over every subject he touched upon. He gained the admiration and the love of all these eminent recluses, but especially of Saci. This laborious student, who spent his life in the study of the Scriptures and the Fathers, was devoted to the writings of St. Augustin, and never heard any striking sentiment on theology to which he did not imagine he could find a parallel in his favourite author. No sooner had Pascal uttered some of those elevated thoughts which were familiar to him, than Saci remembered having read the same thing in Augustin; but without diminishing his admiration of Pascal, for it excited his astonishment, that a young man who had never read the Fathers, should, nevertheless, by his native acuteness, coincide in his thoughts with so celebrated a theologian, and he looked upon him as destined to be a firm sup-

porter and defender of Port Royal, which was at this period exposed to the virulent assaults of the Jesuits.

Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres, a man esteemed for his talents and character, and who was very far from foreseeing that his name would one day become the signal of discord and hatred, had occupied himself in meditating, and in reducing to a system the principles which he believed were contained in the writings of St. Augustin. He wrote his work in Latin, with the title of Augustinus. It was scarcely finished when its author was taken off by the plague, which he caught while examining some manuscripts belonging to one of his clergy, who had died of that malady. The Augustinus made its appearance in 1640, a huge folio, written without order or method, and not more obscure from the nature of the subject, than from the diffuseness and inelegance of the style. It owed its unfortunate celebrity to the illustrious men who forced it into notice, and to the implacable animosity of their enemies.

The Abbé de St. Cyran, a friend of Jansen, entered with the same sentiments, and abhorring the Jesuits and their tenets, extolled the Augustinus even before it appeared, and spread its doctrine by means of an extensive correspondence. The recluses of Port Royal soon after publicly professed their approbation of it. The Jesuits, irritated to the extreme when they beheld their own theology falling into contempt before it, and jealous of the Port Royalists, who eclipsed them in every department of literature, set themselves with all their might to oppose the work of Jansen. The nature of the subject laid it open to ambiguities of language; and by garbling

the words of the author, they formed five propositions, which presented a sense evidently false and erroneous; and thereupon procured a censure from Pope Innocent X, issued May 31, 1653, though without its being determined whether they were exactly contained in the work of Jansen or not The clergy of France, in their convocation of 1655, demanded a fresh sentence, and represented the Jansenists as rebels and heretics. Alexander VII, on October 16, 1656, issued a bull which again condemned the five propositions with a clause declaring that they were faithfully extracted from Jansen's work, and heretical in the sense of their author. This bull served as the basis of a formulary which the clergy prepared in 1657, and of which, four years after, the Court undertook to exact the signature rigorously. Alexander VII issued, in 1657, a second bull, with a formulary on the same subject.

It is probable that the Jesuits would have failed in their persecution of the Jansenists if the first statesmen in Europe had not felt it their interest to support them. Cardinal Richelieu, who had a personal hatred to the Abbé St. Cyran, had tried, at first, to procure the condemnation of his writings by the Papal See, but as he was not a man to endure the ordinary delays of the romish court for an object so frivolous in his eyes as the censure of four or five theological propositions, put forth by a single ecclesiastic, he found it more easy and convenient to lodge St. Cyran in confinement at Vincennes.

Mazarin, less violent, but more skilful in concealing his hatred, and in effecting his vindictive purposes, aimed in secret the most deadly blows at the Jansen-

ists. In his heart he was indifferent to all theological opinions; he had little affection for the Jesuits, but knew that the Port Royal party kept up a connection with his most formidable enemy, the cardinal de Retz. Without enquiring into the nature of this connection, he decided on its criminality, and to avenge himself, he excited the clergy to demand the Bull of 1656. Thus the state was disturbed for a century, because the defenders of a book, which, had it depended on its own merits, would have sunk into oblivion, were the friends of an archbishop of Paris, who was the enemy of the prime minister of France. Mazarin, doubtless, did not foresee the melancholy consequences of his error in introducing the secular power into a theological warfare, of the very existence of which he ought to have been ignorant. Let princes and prime ministers take a lesson from his example.

The recluses of Port Royal, and many other theologians, without defending the literal sense of the five condemned propositions, professed that they were not in the Augustinus, or that if they were, that their meaning, as therein expressed, was agreeable to the catholic faith. They were answered by contrary assertions; the controversy became every day more violent, and a multitude of works appeared, which, from the indulgence of human passions, and the violations of Christian charity they exhibited, gave the enemies of religion a sad occasion of triumph.

Of all the abettors of Jansenism, none showed greater zeal than Arnauld, a man of elevated mind and austere manners. When he entered on the clerical function, he gave almost all his property to the institution of Port Royal, declaring that poverty

became a minister of Jesus Christ. His attachment to what he believed to be truth was as inflexible as truth itself. He detested the corrupt morality of the Jesuits; and was equally the object of their hatred, not only on his own account, but because he was the son of the advocate who had pleaded with vehemence on behalf of the university that they should be interdicted from engaging in the instruction of youth, and even be banished from the kingdom. The following anecdote will show the intense interest with which he espoused the cause of Jansenism. One day, his friend and fellow-soldier in the same cause, but naturally of a mild and yielding disposition, complained that he was weary of the conflict, and longed for repose. "*Repose!*" replied Arnauld, "*will you not have all eternity to repose in?*"

With this disposition, Arnauld published in 1655 a letter, in which he said that he had not found in Jansen the five condemned propositions; and in relation to the question at issue respecting special grace, added, that St. Peter in his denial of Christ was an example of a true believer to whom that grace, without which we can do nothing, was wanting. The first of these assertions appeared contemptuous to the papal chair; the second made him suspected of heresy; and both excited great ferment in the Sorbonne, of which Arnauld was a member. His enemies used every means to bring upon him a humiliating censure. His friends urged on him the necessity of self-defence. He was possessed of great native eloquence, but his style was harsh and negligent. Aware of its defects, he was the first to point out Pascal as the only man capable of doing justice to the subject. Pascal will-

ingly consented to use his pen in a cause so dear to his heart.

On January 23, 1656, he published, under the name of Louis de Montalte, his first letter to a Provincial, in which he ridiculed the meetings of the Sorbonne on the affair of Arnauld with a delicate and refined humour, of which there then existed no model in the French language. This letter met with prodigious success; but the party whose object was to destroy Arnauld, had so well taken their measures, and had brought to the assembly so many doctors and monks devoted to their authority, that not only the two propositions above named were condemned by a majority of votes, but their author was excluded for ever from the faculty of theology by a decree dated Jan. 31, 1656. The triumph of his enemies was somewhat checked by the 2nd, 3rd and 4th letters to a Provincial, which followed close upon the decree of the Sorbonne. The Dominicans, who, to maintain their credit, and to gratify their paltry resentments, appeared on this occasion to have abandoned the doctrine of Aquinas, were overwhelmed with ridicule; but the Jesuits in particular, who had contributed most to Arnauld's condemnation, paid dearly for the joy their success gave them. From their own writings Pascal drew the materials for rendering them odious and ridiculous; and he was the remote instrument of their destruction. The absurd and scandalous decisions of their casuists furnished him with pleasantries and sarcasms in abundance. But it required a genius such as his to combine his materials into a work which might interest not merely theologians, but men of the world

and of all ranks. So much has been said of the Provincial Letters that it is needless to eulogize them. They are universally acknowledged to be unequalled in their kind, and from their publication the fixation of the French language may be dated. Voltaire declares that they combine the wit of Moliere with the sublimity of Bossuet. I will only remark that one great merit of these compositions appears to be the admirable skill with which the transitions are made from one topic to another. The destruction of the Jesuits may have diminished the attractions of the work to certain classes of readers, but it will always be esteemed by men of letters and taste as a masterpiece of style, wit, and eloquence. Unfortunately for the Jesuits, they had not a single good writer among them to reply to it; and the answers they attempted were as defective in style as they were objectionable in sentiment. In short, they met with a total failure, while all France was eager to read the Provincial Letters, which the Jansenists, to increase their circulation, translated into Latin and the principal modern languages.

Among other works put forth by the Jesuits on behalf of their casuists, there was one which gave general dissatisfaction; entitled, *An Apology for the New Casuists against the calumnies of the Jansenists.* The clergy of Paris, and some other places, attacked this book with a powerful and vehement eloquence, worthy of Demosthenes. These productions proceeded chiefly from Arnauld, Nicole, and Pascal. The two former furnished the materials, which were elaborated by the latter. They produced a powerful sensation against the Jesuits, and in spite of all the

credit the fathers possessed with the clergy, many eminent bishops published express mandates against *The Apology for the Casuists.*

The controversy carried on by Pascal against the Jesuits lasted three years; and it prevented his labouring as soon as he had wished, at a great work he had long meditated, on the truth of religion. At different times he set down on paper reflections connected with it, and fully intended to execute the work in 1658; but at that period his infirmities increased so rapidly as to prevent its completion, and nothing but the fragments are left to us. He was first attacked with an excruciating pain in the teeth, which deprived him almost entirely of sleep. During one of his wakeful nights the recollection of some problems relative to the Cycloid roused his mathematical genius. He had long renounced the study of the sciences: but the beauty of the problems and the necessity of diverting his mind by some powerful effort from his bodily sufferings led him into researches of which the results are, even at the present day, reckoned among the finest efforts of the human mind.

The curve well known to mathematicians by the name of Trochoid or Cycloid, is the line described by the motion of any one point in the circumference of a wheel running on the ground. It is not certain by whom this curve was first distinctly noticed, though an allusion to it occurs in Aristotle. Roberval first demonstrated in 1637, that its area is triple that of its generating circle. He also determined, soon after, the solid described by the revolution of the Cycloid on its base, and, what was more difficult for the geometry of that day, the solid described by its

revolution on the diameter of its generating circle. Torricelli published most of these problems, as discovered by himself, in a work printed 1644; but it was asserted in France that Torricelli had found the solutions of Roberval among Galileo's papers; and Pascal, in his history of the Cycloid, hesitates not to treat Torricelli as a plagiarist; but after examining the papers on this subject I must confess that Pascal's opinion seems to have been too hastily formed, and there is reason to believe, that Torricelli resolved those problems, independently of Roberval.

It still remained to find the length, and the centre of gravity of the Cycloid, and of the solids, both those around the base and round the axis. But these researches required a new geometry, or at least a novel application of the principles already known. Pascal, within a week, and amidst extreme suffering, found a method which included all the problems just mentioned, founded on the summation of certain series of which he has given the elements in some papers which accompany his tract on the Arithmetical Triangle. From this to the differential and integral calculus there was only a step, and there is good reason for believing that had Pascal been able to devote more time to his scientific inquiries, he would have deprived Leibnitz and Newton of the glory of their inventions. Having communicated his meditations to some friends, and particularly to the Duke de Roannez, the latter conceived the design of making them contribute to the triumph of religion. Pascal furnished an incontestable proof that it was possible for the same person to be a consummate mathematician and a humble believer. His friends

therefore thought, that even if other mathematicians should succeed in resolving those questions which were to be propounded, and a reward offered for the solution of them, they would at least perceive their difficulty; and thus, while science would be promoted, the honour of accelerating its progress would always belong to the first inventor; if, on the contrary, they could not solve these problems, unbelievers would, thenceforward, have no pretext for being more difficult in regard to the proofs of religion than Pascal was, who had shown himself so profoundly skilled in a science founded altogether on demonstration. Accordingly, in June, 1658, a program was published, in which it was proposed to find the measure and centre of gravity of any segment of a cycloid, the dimensions and centres of gravity of solids, demisolids, &c., which such a segment would produce by turning round the absciss or the ordinate; and as the calculations for the complete solution of all these problems would require much trouble and labour, in default of such a solution, the competitors for the prizes were required to furnish the application of these methods to some remarkable cases, such, for example, as when the absciss is equal to the radius, or to the diameter of the generating circle. Two prizes were offered, one of 40, the other of 20 pistoles. The most celebrated mathematicians in Paris were selected to examine the papers of the competitors, which were to be transmitted, before the 31st of October following, to M. de Carcavi, one of the judges, with whom also the premiums were deposited. In the whole affair, Pascal concealed himself under the name of Amos Dettonville, an anagram of Louis Montalte, the name he had assumed as writer of the Provincial Letters.

The program excited afresh the attention of mathematicians to the properties of the Cycloid, which had been for some time neglected. Hughens squared the segment contained between the summit and the ordinate which answers to a fourth part of the diameter of the generating circle. Sluze, canon of the Cathedral of Liege, measured the area of the curve by a new and ingenious method: Sir Christopher Wren showed that any arc of a cycloid, measured from its summit, is double the corresponding chord of the generating circle; he also determined the centre of gravity of the Cycloidal arc, and the surfaces of its solids of revolution. Fermat and Roberval, on the simple announcement of Wren's theorems, each gave demonstrations. But all these investigations, though very ingenious, did not fully answer the requisitions of the program. Only two persons laid claim to the prize—Lallouère, the Jesuit, and Wallis, who has been already mentioned, and who is so justly celebrated for his Arithmetic of Infinites, published in 1655. After a strict scrutiny, however, by the appointed judges, it appeared that their methods were too defective to satisfy the conditions. On the 1st of January, 1659, Pascal published his own treatise on the Cycloid, which Wallis himself described in a letter to Hughens as 'a work of great genius.'

Meanwhile Pascal was descending rapidly to the grave. The last three years of his life were little else than a perpetual agony, and he was almost totally incapacitated for study. During the short intervals of comparative ease, he occupied himself with his work on religion; his Thoughts were set down on the

first piece of paper that came to hand, and when he was no longer able to hold a pen, they were dictated to an intelligent domestic who constantly attended him. These fragments were collected after his death by the members of Port Royal who published a selection in 1670 under the title of *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la Religion et sur quelques autres sujets.* The first edition of the Thoughts omitted many very interesting fragments, and even some complete Essays, such as those on Authority in matters of Philosophy, the Reflections on Geometry, and on the Art of Persuasion, which are invaluable for their justness and originality.*

In private life, Pascal was continually engaged in mortifying his senses and elevating his soul to God. It was a maxim with him to renounce all indulgences and superfluities. He removed from his apartment all articles of ornament; he ate only to satisfy the necessary calls of hunger, and not to gratify his palate. When he first retired from general society he ascertained what quantity of food was necessary for his support, which he never exceeded, and whatever disgust he felt, never failed taking it; a method of which the motive may be respected, but which is very ill adapted to the variable state of the human frame.

His charity was very great; he regarded the poor as his brethren, and never refused giving alms, though often at the cost of personal privation, for his means were very limited, and his infirmities at times called for expenses which exceeded his income. Some time before his death, he received under his roof a

* These Essays are for the first time presented to the English Reader in this Translation.—*Tr.*

poor man and his son, moved only by Christian pity. The child was seized with the small pox, and could scarcely be removed without danger. Pascal himself was very ill, and needed the constant assistance of Madame Perier. But as her children had never had the small pox, Pascal would not expose them to the danger of infection. He therefore decided against himself in favour of the poor man, and occupied a small incommodious apartment at his sister's. We may here mention another remarkable instance of his benevolence. One morning, returning from church, a beautiful girl about sixteen years of age came to him to beg alms, pleading that her father was dead, and that her mother had that morning been taken ill and carried to the Hotel-Dieu. Impressed with the danger to which the poor girl was exposed, he placed her immediately in a seminary under the care of a venerable ecclesiastic, to whom he gave a sum of money for the expenses of food and clothes, and continued his aid till she was placed in a respectable family. The purity of his manners was most exemplary. He carried his scrupulosity so far as sometimes to reprove Madame Perier for the caresses she bestowed on her children. To repress feelings of self-complacency, he wore a girdle of iron armed with points, which he used to strike with violence whenever he felt any undue elation of mind. Persuaded that the law of God forbids the surrender of the heart to created objects, he carefully controlled his affection, even for his nearest relations. Madame Perier sometimes complained of the coldness of his manners, but when an occasion presented itself for his services, he evinced so deep an interest in her welfare, that she

could no longer doubt of his sincere affection. She then attributed his former insensibility of behaviour to the influence of bodily disorders, not aware that it had a purer and more elevated source.

While the disputes between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, were at their height, an event happened which was looked upon by the latter as a testimony from heaven in their favour. A daughter of Madame Perier, between ten and eleven years old, had been afflicted for three years and a half with a lacrymal fistula of the worst kind; purulent and extremely offensive matter was discharged from the eye, nose, and mouth. On Friday, March 24th, 1656, she was touched with what was deemed a relic of the holy thorn, which had been lent to the convent of Port Royal by M. de la Poterie, an ecclesiastic of eminent piety; the consequence is asserted to have been an instant cure. Racine, in his History of Port Royal, says that such was the silence habitually maintained in the convent, that for more than six days after the miracle, some of the sisters had not heard of it. It is not usual for persons of ardent faith to behold a miracle wrought under their eyes, without being struck with astonishment and impelled to glorify God by communicating it to others. The reserve of the members of Port Royal, on this occasion, may appear to some persons to cast doubts upon the fact itself; by minds favourably disposed, it will be considered an argument that the cure was not one of those pious frauds which are adopted by the leaders of a party in order to gain over a credulous multitude. The directors of Port Royal, believing it was their duty not to conceal so signal a favour of Providence,

wished to confer on the fact the highest marks of credibility. Four celebrated physicians, and several eminent surgeons, who had examined the disease, certified that a cure was impossible by human means. The miracle was published with the solemn attestation of the vicars-general who governed the diocese of Paris in the absence of Cardinal de Retz. The manner in which it was received by the world completed the confusion of the Jesuits. They endeavoured to deny it, and to support their incredulity employed this ridiculous argument; Port Royal is heretical, and God never works miracles for heretics. To this it was replied; the miracle at Port Royal is certain; you cannot bring into doubt an ascertained fact; the cause of the Jansenists is good and you are calumniators. A particular circumstance gave weight to this reasoning; the relic wrought no miracles except at Port Royal; transferred to the Ursulines or Carmelites, no effects were produced; it cured none — it was said because these latter establishments had no enemy, and needed not a miracle to prove that God was with them. Whatever judgment may be formed of this event, whether the cure (for that seems indisputable) is to be imputed to the operation of natural causes, not ascertained by the medical science of the times; to the influence of a credulous imagination in the patient, or to what some persons will perhaps admit, the divine power supernaturally excited in condescension to a sincere and genuine piety, though mixed with many errors (and such the leading members of Port Royal, will be allowed by candid Protestants to have possessed) one thing is certain, Pascal, of whose

integrity and love of truth there can be no doubt, remained satisfied that the cure was the work of God, and his niece retained the same conviction during the whole course of a long life.

During the last two years of Pascal's life, his sufferings both of mind and body were extreme. In 1661 he endured the pain of witnessing the rise of that long persecution under which the institution of Port Royal at last sunk. The favour in which the Jansenists were held by the public only exasperated the Jesuits. To insure their destruction, the Jesuits obtained an order for all the members of the Convent to sign the formulary of 1657, being certain that the advice of their directors would be either not to sign it, or to sign it with limitations equally favourable to their projects of vengeance. The Vicar-general of Paris, in consequence, received orders to execute this mandate with the utmost rigour. It is needless to describe the sad dilemma in which the Port Royalists found themselves placed, forced to pass a judgment on the work of Jansen of which they understood neither the language nor the matter; on the one hand, honouring the authority which oppressed them, on the other, dreading to betray the truth: rebels in the eyes of government if they refused to sign, and culpable in the eyes of their directors if they signed a document which they considered as drawn from the clergy and the Pope by the intrigues of the Jesuits. These cruel perplexities shortened the life of Jacqueline Pascal. At the time of the visit of the Vicar-general, she was sub-prioress of Port Royal; the violent conflict she endured arising from her anxiety to submit, and the fear of violating her

conscience, brought on an illness of which she died, Oct. 4, 1661, *the first victim* (as she expressed it) *of the Formulary.* Pascal loved her tenderly, and when informed of her death, said, "God grant us grace that our death may be like hers."

The members of Port Royal addressed some temperate complaints to the Court, which were construed by the Jesuits as a criminal resistance, and they insinuated that the directors of the monastery were fomenting a dangerous heresy. Yet they had never hesitated to condemn the five propositions abstractly; they had only distinguished in the *Constitution* of Alexander VII, two questions, the one of right, the other of fact; they received as a rule of faith the question of right, that is the censure of the five propositions in the sense they offered at first sight, and abstracted from all the circumstances which could restrict or modify them; but they did not consider themselves obliged to adhere to the assertion of the Pope when he said that the five propositions were formally contained in Jansen and were heretical in the sense of that author, because it was possible, according to them, that the Pope, and even the Church, might be deceived on questions of fact. Pascal adopted this distinction very fully, and makes it the basis of his reasoning in the last two Provincial Letters, which appeared in 1657. Four years after, when it was again attempted to procure signatures to the Formulary, the Jansenists made a fresh concession; they consented that the nuns should sign it, declaring simply that they could not judge whether the propositions condemned by the Pope and which they also condemned sincerely, were taken or not from Jansen. But

this slight and reasonable limitation would not content the Jesuits, whose object was to destroy the Port Royalists, or to force them to a dishonourable recantation. This result Pascal had foreseen; and far from approving of the concessions of the Jansenists, he always told them, 'You aim to save Port Royal; you will not save it, and you will betray the truth.' He even changed his opinion as to the distinction between the question of right and of fact. The doctrine of Jansen on the five propositions appeared to him to be exactly the same as that of St. Paul, St. Augustin, and St. Prosper. Whence he inferred that the Pope, in condemning the sense of Jansen, was mistaken, not only on a point of fact, but of right, and that no one could conscientiously sign the Formulary. He charged the Port Royalists with weakness; he told them plainly, that in their different writings they had had too much regard to present advantage, and had changed with the times. The elevation and rectitude of his mind saw in these temporising measures, nothing but subterfuges, invented to serve an occasion, and perfectly unworthy of the true defenders of the Church. They replied to these reproaches by explaining, in a long and ingenious manner, a method of subscribing to the Formulary without wounding their consciences or offending the government. But all these explanations produced no change of sentiment in Pascal; they had an opposite effect to what was desired; they occasioned a degree of coolness in his intercourse with the recluses of Port Royal. This little misunderstanding, which was not concealed on either side, was the occasion of a singular misrepresentation,

of which the Jesuits were very ready to take advantage. M. Beurier, minister of St. Stephen's-on-the-Hill, a pious but not well-informed man, who attended Pascal in his last illness, having heard it vaguely said by this celebrated man that he did not think with the Port Royalists on the question of grace, believed that these words implied that he thought with their adversaries. He never imagined that it was possible for any one to be more a Jansenist than Nicole and Arnauld. About three years after Pascal's death, M. Beurier, on the confused evidence of his memory, attested in writing to the Archbishop of Paris, Hardouin de Perefixe, a zealous molinist, that Pascal had told him that he had withdrawn himself from the Port Royalists on the question of the Formulary, and that he did not consider them sufficiently submissive to the Holy See. Precisely the contrary was the fact. But the Jesuits made a pompous exhibition of this declaration: unable to reply to the Provincial Letters, they endeavoured to persuade the world that their author had retracted them, especially the last two; and finally, had adopted their theology. But the Jansenists easily confuted these ridiculous assertions. They opposed to the evidence of M. Beurier, contrary testimonies infinitely more circumstantial and positive, and to remove every doubt produced the writings in which Pascal explained his sentiments. Overpowered by these proofs, M. Beurier acknowledged that he had misunderstood Pascal's words, and formally retracted his declaration. Henceforward the Jesuits were forced to acknowledge that Pascal died in the principles of the most rigorous Jansenism.

To return to his last illness. In June, 1662, he was attacked by a severe and almost constant colic, which nearly deprived him of sleep. The physicians who attended him, though they perceived that his strength was much reduced, did not apprehend immediate danger, as there were no febrile symptoms. He was far from having the same security; from the first moment of the attack, he said that they were deceived, and that the malady would be fatal. He confessed himself several times, and would have taken the viaticum, but not to alarm his friends, consented to a delay, being assured by the physicians, that in a day or two, he would be able to receive the communion at Church. Meanwhile his pains continued to increase, violent headaches succeeded, and frequent numbness, so that his sufferings were almost insupportable. Yet so resigned was he to the will of God, that not the least expression of complaint or impatience escaped him. His mind was occupied with plans of beneficence and charity. He made his will, in which the greater part of his property was left to the poor; he would have left them all, if such an arrangement had not been to the injury of the children of M. and Madame Perier, who were by no means rich. Since he could do no more for the poor, he wished to die among them, and urgently desired to be carried to the Hospital of the Incurables, and he was induced to abandon this wish only by a promise, that if he recovered, he should be at liberty to consecrate his life and property entirely to the service of the poor. On the 17th of August, however, he was seized with violent convulsions. His attendants reproached themselves for having opposed the

ardent desire he had so often expressed of receiving the Eucharist. But they had the consolation of seeing him fully recover his recollection. The minister of St. Stephen's then entered with the Sacrament and said, 'Behold him whom you have so long desired.' Pascal raised himself, and received the viaticum with a devotion and resignation that drew tears from all around him. Immediately after, the convulsions returned, and never left him till he expired on the 19th August, 1662, aged thirty-nine years and two months.

On examining his body, the stomach and liver were found much diseased, and the intestines mortified; it was remarked with astonishment that the quantity of brain was enormous, and of a very solid and dense consistence.

Such was this extraordinary man, who was endowed with the choicest gifts of mind; a geometrician of the first order, a profound dialectician, an eloquent and sublime writer. If we recollect that in the course of a short life, oppressed with almost continual suffering, he invented the arithmetical machine, the principles of the calculation of probabilities, the method for resolving the problems of the Cycloid; that he reduced to certainty the opinions of philosophers relative to the weight of the atmosphere; that he was the first to establish on geometrical demonstration, the general laws of the equilibrium of fluids, that he was the author of one of the most perfect specimens of composition in the French language; that in his *Thoughts*, (unfinished and detached as they are for the most part,) there are fragments of incomparable profundity, and eloquence, we shall be

disposed to believe that there never existed in any nation a greater genius; or, we may add, a more devout believer.

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF MAN.

I. THE first thing presented to the self-observation of Man, is his body, that is to say, a certain portion of matter peculiar to himself. But to comprehend what this is, he must compare it with every thing above and below him, that thus he may ascertain his just limits.

Let him, then, not confine his attention to the objects that are close around him: let him contemplate all Nature in its awful and finished magnificence; let him observe that splendid luminary, set forth as an eternal lamp to enlighten the universe; let him view the Earth as a mere speck within the vast circuit described by that luminary; let him think with amazement, that this vast circuit itself is only a minute point, compared with that formed by the revolutions of the stars. And though sight

stops here, let imagination pass onwards. Even this faculty will fail in conceiving sooner than nature in furnishing materials for its exercise. All that we see of the creation, is but an almost imperceptible streak in the vast expanse of the universe. No idea of ours can approximate to its immense extent. However we may amplify our conceptions, they will still be mere atoms in comparison with the reality of things. This is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, but its circumference nowhere. In short, it is one of the greatest sensible evidences of the almightiness of God, that our imagination is overwhelmed by these reflections.

Let man reverting to himself, consider what he is, compared with all that exists. Let him behold himself a wanderer in this secluded province of nature, and by what he can see from the little dungeon in which he finds himself lodged, (I mean the visible universe,) let him learn to make a right estimate of the earth, its kingdoms, its cities and himself.

Man, then, existing here in the midst of infinity, who can tell what to make of him? But to show him another prodigy equally astonishing, let him examine the most minute objects he is acquainted with. A mite for example, will exhibit, in its diminutive body, parts incomparably less; limbs with their joints, veins in these limbs, blood in these veins, humours in this blood; drops in these humours, vapours in these drops; and analyzing the last mentioned objects, let him stretch his powers of conception to the utmost, and the most minute particle he can descry, shall be our topic. Perhaps he may sup-

pose that this must be the extreme of littleness in Nature. But even this contains a new abyss for him to behold. I will represent to him, not only the visible universe, but all he can conceive as existing in infinite space, comprised in this imperceptible atom. Here let him behold an infinity of systems, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as the visible universe: in this earth, he will find animals and even mites, consisting of a similar variety of parts as the former, and these again capable of subdivision without cessation and without end. Let him lose himself in these wonders, as astonishing for their littleness, as the others for their magnitude. For who can help being amazed, that a human body, scarcely discernible in our system, and that again, lost in the immensity of nature, should, nevertheless, be a colossus, a system of worlds, or rather an universe, compared with that extreme littleness, which our perception can never reach? Whoever takes such a view will be alarmed to behold himself, as it were suspended, in the material vehicle assigned him by nature, between the two abysses of infinity and nonentity, from each of which he is equally distant. He will tremble at the sight of these wonders; and I believe that his curiosity changing into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence, than to explore them with presumption.—

For, finally, what is the rank man occupies in Nature? A nonentity, as contrasted with infinity; a universe, contrasted with nonentity; a middle something between every thing and nothing. He is in-

finitely remote from these two extremes: his existence is not less distant from the nonentity out of which he is taken, than from the infinity in which he is ingulfed. His intellect holds the same rank, in the order of intelligences, as his body in the material universe, and all it can attain is, to catch some glimpses of objects that occupy the middle, in eternal despair of knowing either extreme.—All things have sprung from nothing and are borne forward to infinity. Who can follow out such an astonishing career? The Author of these wonders, and he alone, can comprehend them.

This condition, the middle, namely, between two extremes, is a characteristic of all our faculties. Our senses perceive nothing in the extreme. A very loud sound deafens us; a very intense light blinds us; a very great or a very short distance disables our vision; excessive length or excessive brevity obscures discourse; too much pleasure cloys, and unvaried harmony offends us. Extreme heat, or extreme cold, destroys sensation. Any qualities in excess are hurtful to us, and pass beyond the range of our senses. We cannot be said to feel them, but to endure them. Extreme youth and extreme old age alike enfeeble the mind; too much, or too little food, disturbs its operations; too much, or too little instruction, represses its vigour. Extremes are to us, as though they did not exist, and we are nothing in reference to them. They elude us, or we elude them.

Such is our real state; our acquirements are confined within limits which we cannot pass, alike in-

capable of attaining universal knowledge or of remaining in total ignorance. We are in the middle of a vast expanse, always unfixed, fluctuating between ignorance and knowledge; if we think of advancing further, our object shifts its position and eludes our grasp; it steals away and takes an eternal flight that nothing can arrest. This is our natural condition, altogether contrary, however, to our inclinations. We are inflamed with a desire of exploring every thing, and of building a tower that shall rise into infinity, but our edifice is shattered to pieces, and the ground beneath it discloses a profound abyss.

II. I can easily conceive a man existing without hands or feet, and I could conceive him too without a head, did I not know from experience that this is the part in which he exercises thought. It is thought, then, that constitutes the essence of man, and without which we can form no conception of him. What is that by which we are sensible of pleasure? Is it the hand? is it the arm? is it the flesh? is it the blood? We perceive that it must be something immaterial.

III. Man is so great, that his greatness appears even in knowing himself to be miserable. A tree has no sense of misery. It is true, that to *know* we are miserable, is to *be* miserable; but to *know* we are miserable is also to be great. Thus all the miseries of man prove his grandeur; they are the miseries of a dignified personage, the miseries of a dethroned monarch.

IV. Who ever felt unhappy in not being a king, except a deposed sovereign? Was Paulus Emilius unhappy in being no longer Consul? On the contrary, every one might see he was happy in ceasing to hold that office, because to resign it after a limited period, was a condition of its assumption. But Perseus who had expected to be always a king, was so wretched when no longer on the throne, that it seemed strange that he could endure to live. Is any person unhappy because he has only one mouth? but who would not be unhappy in having only one eye? It is never any man's fancy to lament he has not three eyes, but it is felt to be very distressing to have but one.

V. We have so exalted a conception of the human soul that we cannot endure its contempt, or bear the want of its approbation: in short, all the felicity of men consists in possessing this approbation. While in one view the false glory which men pursue is a striking mark of their misery and degradation, it is also a proof of the dignity of their nature. For whatever may be a man's possessions in the world, whatever of health or other important good he may enjoy, yet is he dissatisfied if he has not the esteem of his fellow-men. Such is the value he sets on the approbation of mankind, that however elevated his condition in life may be, he deems himself unfortunate if he does not occupy an analogous elevation in the general regard. This is accounted the most delightful situation in the world; and to desire it is the most unconquerable propensity of the human

heart. Even those who most despise mankind, and would put them on a level with the brutes, still covet admiration; and thus their own feelings contradict the contempt they assume. Nature more powerful than all their reason, convinces them more forcibly of the grandeur of man, than reason can convince them of his degradation.

VI. Man is the feeblest reed in existence, but he is a thinking reed. There is no need that the universe be armed for his destruction; a noxious vapour, a drop of water is enough to cause his death. But though the universe were to destroy him, man would be more noble than his destroyer, for he would know that he was dying, while the universe would know nothing of its own achievement. Thus all our dignity consists in the thinking principle. This and not space and duration, is what elevates us.—Let us labour then to think aright; here is the foundation of morals.

VII. It is dangerous to show man in how many respects he resembles the inferior animals, without pointing out his grandeur. It is also dangerous to direct his attention to his grandeur without keeping him aware of his degradation. It is still more dangerous to leave him ignorant of both; but to exhibit both to him will be most beneficial.

VIII. Let man then estimate himself justly. Let him love himself, for he has a nature capable of good; but let him not, on this account love the vile-

ness that adheres to it. Let him despise himself because this capacity for good has been left vacant, but let him not despise the capacity itself. Let him hate himself; let him love himself. He is capable of knowing truth and of being happy: but he has not the constant or satisfactory possession of truth. I wish, then, that he might be excited to desire truth, and so freed from his passions as to pursue the right course for finding it; and aware how much his knowledge is obscured by his passions, I wish him to hate those corrupt desires which would conform him to themselves, that they may neither blind him while making his choice nor frustrate that choice, when he has made it.

IX. I blame equally those who make it their sole business to extol man, and those who take on them to blame him, and those also who attempt to amuse him. I can approve none but those who examine his nature with sorrow and compassion.

The Stoics said, *Retire into yourselves, there you will find repose:* but this was not true;—others said, *Go out of yourselves and seek for happiness in amusement;* and this too was wrong. There are diseases ready to destroy these delusions: happiness can be found neither in ourselves nor in external things, but in God and in ourselves as united to him.

X. There are two ways of taking account of the nature of man: That in which we consider him in relation to the final object of his being;—and in this view he is grand and incomprehensible: and that in which

we allow our judgment of him to be formed by the mere habitual sight of his actions, excluding his spiritual essence *(animum arcendi)* from our consideration, as our judgment of horses and dogs is formed from being accustomed to see them run—man regarded in this light only, is abject and worthless. These are the two modes of judging of human nature which have produced so many disputes among philosophers; one party denies what the other assumes. One says, Man was not born for such an end, for all his actions are in contradiction to it; the other says, Man renounces his true end in acting so vilely. Two things may acquaint man with the whole constitution of his nature, Instinct and Experience.

XI. I perceive it is possible I might not have existed, for my essence consists in the thinking principle; therefore I, this thinking being, should never have existed, had my mother been killed before I was animated:—then I am not a necessary being. Nor am I eternal or infinite, but I see plainly, that there is in nature, a necessary, eternal, and infinite Being.

CHAPTER II.

THE VANITY OF MAN, AND THE EFFECTS OF SELF-LOVE.

I. We are not content with the life we have in ourselves, and in our individual being; we wish to live an imaginary life in the thoughts of others, and for this purpose, strive to make a figure in the world. We labour incessantly to cherish and adorn this imaginary being, and neglect the real one; and if we possess tranquillity, or generosity, or fidelity, we are eager to make it known, that such virtues may be transferred to this creature of the imagination; in order to effect their union with it, we are willing to detach them from ourselves, and would be content to be cowards, if we could only gain the repute of being valiant. What a proof of the nothingness of our real being, that it will not satisfy us without the other, for which, indeed, we often relinquish it! A man who would not part with his life to preserve his honour would be esteemed infamous. Glory is so very delightful, that with whatever it is combined, even with death itself, we still love it.

II. Pride is a counterpoise to all our miseries, for either it conceals them, or, if it discovers them, flatters us for being so wise as to know them. Amidst all our errors and miseries, it clings to us so tenaciously that we make a surrender of our lives with joy, provided men will talk about it.

III. Vanity is so rooted in the human heart, that a foot-boy, or a porter will contrive to have a little knot of admirers about him; and philosophers do just the same. Those who write against glory, covet the glory of having written well, and those who read them wish for the glory of having read. I who am writing this remark, have, perhaps, a similar desire, and so, perhaps, will those have who read it.

IV. In spite of the sense of all the miseries which fasten upon us, and threaten our very existence, we have a tendency to elevation which cannot be repressed.

V. We are so arrogant, that we wish to be known all over the world, and even by persons who will not come into existence till we are no more; yet we are so vain, that the respect of five or six persons about us, amuses, and for a time, satisfies us.

VI. Curiosity is nothing but vanity. Men in general wish for knowledge merely that they may talk about it. They would never take a voyage, if they were only to enjoy their adventures, without the prospect of conversing with some one respecting them.

VII. Persons are not concerned about their reputation in towns which they only pass through; but if they stop anywhere a little time, it becomes a matter of importance. And how long must this stay be? A time proportioned to our vain and petty existence.

VIII. The essence of self-love, is to love only one's-self; to be interested for nothing but one's-self. But what is gained by this? A man cannot prevent this object of his love from being full of defects and miseries: he wishes to be great, and sees himself to be little; he wishes to be happy, and feels himself miserable; he wishes to be perfect, and sees himself full of imperfections; he wishes to be an object of the esteem and love of his fellow-men, and sees that his faults deserve their aversion and contempt. This embarrassment produces the most unjust and criminal passion imaginable; for he conceives a mortal hatred against that truth which forces him to behold and condemn his faults; he wishes it were annihilated, and unable to destroy it in its essence, he endeavours to destroy it to his own apprehension, and that of others; that is, he employs his utmost efforts, to conceal his defects, both from himself and others, and cannot bear that men should point them out to him, or even see them. Certainly, to be full of defects is an evil; but it is a much greater evil, if we are full of them, to be unwilling to know the fact; since this is adding a voluntary illusion to their number. We are not willing that others should impose on us; we deem it unjust that they should wish for more of our esteem than they deserve, but by the same rule it is wrong to deceive them, or to wish that they should esteem us more than we deserve.

When others, therefore, discover the imperfections and vices that really belong to us, it is evident they do us no wrong, since they are not the cause

of them: in fact, they render us a service, by helping to rid us of at least, one evil—ignorance of our imperfections. We ought not to be irritated that men know our faults, it being quite right both that they should know us to be what we are, and that they should despise us, if we are despicable. Such are the sentiments which would rise in a heart imbued with equity and justice. What then shall be said of our hearts, which betray quite a contrary disposition? For is it not undeniable that we hate the truth, and those who speak it? that we love they should be deceived in our favour, and that we wish to be esteemed by them as different from what we really are?

There is one proof of this which affects me with horror. The Catholic religion does not enjoin the confession of sins indiscriminately to all the world; it allows them to remain concealed from all persons excepting *one*, to whom it requires the heart to be exposed without reserve, that he may judge of its true condition. There is but one man in the world whom it commands us to undeceive, and he is bound to an inviolable secrecy: so that the knowledge entrusted to him, is as if nothing were known. Can any thing be imagined more charitable and more lenient? Nevertheless, such is the corruption of human nature, that this regulation has been complained of as severe, and was one of the chief reasons, which prompted a great part of Europe, to revolt from the Church.

How perverse and unreasonable is the human heart, to be offended at an obligation; to do that to

one man, which, in some sense, is due to all: for is it right that we should deceive them?

There are different degrees of this aversion to the truth, but we may affirm, that, in some measure, it exists in all men, for it is inseparable from self-love. It is this false delicacy that compels those who have occasion to reprove others, to employ such address and nicety in the selection of opportunities. In order to avoid giving offence, they must extenuate our faults, and affect to excuse them, and mingle with their censures, compliments and expressions of affection and esteem. And with all these mixtures, the medicine is still bitter to self-love; it takes as little of the preparation as possible—always with disgust, and often with secret resentment against those who administer it.

Hence it comes to pass, that if any persons are solicitous to gain our kind regard, they avoid a service which they know would be disagreeable to us; they treat us as we wish to be treated:—we hate the truth, they withhold it; we like to be flattered, they flatter us; we like to be deceived, they deceive us.

This is the cause, that every advance of good fortune, which raises us in the world, removes us so much farther from the truth, because there is a greater fear of offending those whose favour is very valuable, and whose aversion is very dangerous. A prince may be the scorn of all Europe, and be the only person who does not know it. I do not wonder at this. To speak the truth might be useful to him who should hear it, but would be disadvantageous to those who should tell it, for they would incur his

hatred. And courtiers love their own interests better than that of their prince, and therefore are not disposed to promote his advantage at the cost of injuring themselves.

This misfortune is doubtless most incident, and that in its worst degree, to the higher orders of society; but men of the lowest rank are not exempt from it, because in all stations there is something which makes it desirable to have men's good-will. And thus human life is nothing but a perpetual illusion, an interchange of flattery and deception. None speak of us in our presence as they do in our absence. The union maintained among men is founded on this reciprocal deceit; and most friendships would be at an end if every one knew what his friend says of him when he is out of hearing, though what is then said be spoken sincerely and dispassionately.

Man, therefore, is nothing but disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both towards himself and others. He does not wish the truth to be spoken to him, he avoids speaking it to others; and all these dispositions so alien from justice and reason, are the natural growth of his heart.

CHAPTER III.

THE WEAKNESS OF MAN; THE UNCERTAINTY OF NATURAL KNOWLEDGE.

I. NOTHING astonishes me so much, as to see that mankind are not astonished at their own weakness. Every man goes through the business of life, and follows his profession, not under the notion that it is best so to do, in deference to the sentiments and habits of the community, but as if he knew with certainty the precise line of reason and justice. Men are perpetually deceived, and by a ridiculous humility suppose it is their own fault, and not that of the art which they always pride themselves on possessing. It is well, however, that there are so many persons of this sort in the world, for it shows that no opinions are too extravagant for mankind to adopt; if they are capable of believing, that, so far from being naturally and unavoidably liable to err, they naturally possess wisdom fully adequate to the conduct of life.

II. The weakness of human reason is much more apparent in those who are not sensible of it, than in those who know it. When very young, our judgment is feeble, and so it is in extreme old age. If we do not think enough, or if we think too intensely, we become fanciful and unable to discover truth. If we examine our work as soon as it is finished, we

are too much prepossessed in its favour; if we defer examining it too long, we cannot enter into its spirit. There is a certain indivisible point which is the proper focus for viewing a picture; every other is too near or too distant, too high or too low. Perspective assigns this point in the art of painting, but in truth and morals who shall assign it?

III. That mistress of Error, called Fancy and Opinion, deceives us more effectually, because she does not always deceive us; for she would be an infallible rule of truth, if she were an infallible rule of falsehood. As she is not constantly, though most frequently false, she gives no distinctive mark of her agency, but impresses the same character on truth and falsehood.

This haughty power, the enemy of that reason which (in order to show the universality of her sway,) she is delighted to control and overrule, has infused into man a second nature. She reckons among her votaries, the happy, and the unhappy; the healthy, and the sick; the rich, and the poor; the wise, and the unwise; and nothing affects us with deeper regret, than to observe, that the satisfaction she imparts to them, is much more abundant and unmingled, than that communicated by reason. Men of lively parts who indulge in flights of the imagination, can please themselves to a degree far beyond the reach of those thoughtful persons, who seek for gratification in the sober exercises of reflection. The latter dispute with fear and diffidence, the former with boldness and assurance;

they look down upon others with an air of command; and their easy unembarassed mien often gives them the advantage in the opinion of by-standers: such is the estimation in which these sages of the imagination are held by judges equally profound! Opinion cannot make fools wise, but she makes them content, to the disparagement of reason, who makes her friends miserable. The partisans of the one are covered with glory, those of the other with shame.

Who, in fact is the dispenser of reputation? By whom, are respect and veneration awarded, to persons even of the highest rank, and to all the works of men, unless it be by Opinion?. How unsatisfactory are all the riches of the world without her approbation!

Every thing is regulated by Opinion; she is the criterion of beauty, justice, and happiness, the three things which make up the world. I should very much like to see an Italian book, of which I know only the title; but that alone is worth volumes: "*Della opinione regina del mondo.*" 'Of Opinion the queen of the world.' I subscribe to its truth, without having read it, of course excepting the objectionable parts, if there be any such, of which, however, the title gives no indication.

IV. The most important step in life is the choice of a profession, yet chance determines the point. It is custom which makes masons, soldiers, and tilers. "Such an one," says some persons, "is an excellent tiler:" or if the conversation turns on military

affairs, some will say, " What arrant fools are soldiers!" while others exclaim, " Nothing is so glorious as war! the rest of mankind are simpletons." But so it is; we hear, from our childhood, certain professions applauded, and others depreciated, and make our choice accordingly; for men naturally love excellence, and hate its opposite. The words affect us, but we err in their application; and so great is the force of custom, that whole districts are full of masons, and others of soldiers. Certainly, nature is not so uniform. It is therefore the effect of custom, which forces nature along with it; but sometimes, nature prevails, and keeps man faithful to his instinct, in spite of all custom good or bad.

V. We never confine ourselves to time present. We anticipate the future, as too slow, and as if we could hasten it; we recall the past, to stop it, as if it were too quick. We are so foolish, as to wander into time which is not our own, and never think of the only portion that belongs to us; and we are so fanciful, that we dwell on that which is not, and suffer the existing time to escape without reflection; for it is generally the present that gives us pain; we put it out of sight, because it distresses us, but if it be agreeable, we regret to see it escape; we endeavour to hold it fast, by means of the future, and think of adjusting what is not within our power, for a period which we have no assurance will ever arrive.

Let any one examine his thoughts, he will find them always occupied with the past and the future.

We scarcely think of the present, or if we allow it to enter our thoughts, it is only to borrow light from it, for the regulation of the future. The present is never our aim. The past, and the present, are looked upon as means: the future is our main object; we are never living, but hoping to live; and whilst we are always preparing to be happy, it is certain, we never shall be so, if we aspire to no other happiness than what can be enjoyed in this life.

VI. Our imagination so powerfully magnifies time, by continual reflections upon it, and so diminishes eternity to our apprehension for want of reflection, that we make a nothing of eternity, and an eternity of nothing; and so vigorous and deeply rooted is this propensity, that the utmost efforts of our reason cannot extirpate it.

VII. Cromwell was on the point of overturning all Christendom; the royal family would have been ruined, and his own permanently established, if a small piece of gravel had not lodged in his ureter. Rome herself, was ready to tremble before him, but this small grain, of no consequence elsewhere, stopping in this particular part, he dies, his family are reduced, and the king is restored.

VIII. We see scarcely any thing that goes by the name of justice or injustice, which does not change its quality, by a change of climate. Three or four degrees of latitude reverse the whole system

of jurisprudence; a meridian decides truth; and a few years determine possession. Fundamental laws change; right has its epochs. What exquisite justice, defined by a river or a mountain! Truth on one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other side!

IX. Robbery, incest, the murder of children and parents, have all been ranked among virtuous actions. Can any thing be more ridiculous, than that a man has a right to kill me, because he lives on the other side of the water, and because his prince has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?

No doubt, there are natural laws; but our beautiful reason, itself corrupted, has corrupted everything else, *Nihil amplius nostri est; quod nostrum dicimus, artis est; ex senatus consultis et plebiscitis crimina exercentur; ut olim vitiis, sic nunc legibus laboramus*—"There is nothing we can now call our own, for what we call so is the effect of art; crimes are made by the decrees of the senate, or by the votes of the people; and as heretofore we were burdened by vices, so now are we oppressed by laws."

In consequence of this confusion, one man says that the essence of justice is the authority of the lawgiver; another affirms that it consists in the advantage of the sovereign; a third asserts that present custom is the surest rule; that following the guidance of reason alone, nothing is just in itself, every thing changes with the times: custom determines equity for the sole reason that it is so received—

this is the mysterious basis of its authority. Whoever traces it to its principles, annihilates it; nothing is so defective as the very laws which correct defects: he who obeys them, because they are just, obeys an imaginary justice, but not the essential principle of law: it is complete in itself, it is law and nothing more; whoever sets himself to examine its main spring, will find it to be so feeble and slight, that if he has not been accustomed to observe the eccentricities of the human imagination, he will wonder that a single age could obtain for it such homage and veneration.

The art of overturning states, consists in shaking established customs, by examining their foundation, and thus pointing out their want of authority and justice. We must revert, men say, to the primitive and fundamental laws of the state, which illegal usages have kept in abeyance: this is a dangerous game, which will end in universal confusion; nothing can be accurately weighed in such a balance:—meanwhile the people readily lend their ears to such assertions, and as soon as they receive them, their yoke falls off: while the higher ranks make use of this language to their ruin, and to that of the curious examiners into received customs. But, by an opposite error, men sometimes believe that they have a right to do every thing which is not without example. For this reason, the wisest of legislators has said, that men must sometimes be imposed upon for their good; and another able politician—"*Cum veritatem qua liberetur ignoret, expedit quod fallatur*"—"When men know not the truth by which

they should be freed, it is of use to deceive them." They must not perceive the reality of the usurpation, it must be regarded as of unquestionable and eternal authority, and its beginning must be concealed, if we do not wish very soon to see its end.

X. The greatest philosopher in the world, passing over a precipice, upon a plank a little broader than would be absolutely necessary for walking, though convinced by reason of his safety, would be overpowered by his imagination. Many a one could not even think of being in such a situation, without sweating, and turning pale. I need not mention all the effects. Every one knows, the sight of a cat or a rat, or the crushing of a cinder, will put some persons out of their wits.

XI. You are ready to say that this magistrate, whose venerable age commands universal respect, must needs govern himself by a pure and exalted reason, and will judge of things by their real nature, without being affected by those trivial circumstances which strike the imagination of feeble minds. Well, observe him as he enters a court of justice, and prepares to hear the causes with all the gravity befitting his high office. At this instant, let an advocate make his appearance, on whom nature has unfortunately bestowed a harsh voice, and an odd set of features; or suppose he is badly shaved, or by some accident has been splashed with dirt; I will wager that the magistrate loses his gravity.

XII. The mind of the greatest man in the world is not so independent of circumstances, as to prevent his being disturbed by the most insignificant noise. The report of a cannon is not requisite to break the chain of his thoughts; the creaking of a weather-cock, or of a pulley, will suffice. Why should you be surprised that he cannot reason well just now? How, let me ask, is he to put his thoughts together, as long as that fly is buzzing about his ears? If you wish him to find out the truth, pray drive away the insect that holds his reason in check, and disturbs that powerful understanding which governs cities and kingdoms.

XIII. The will is one of the principal instruments of belief; not that it directly produces belief; but things appear true or false, according to the view we take of them. Now, the will, pleased with one view rather than another, diverts the understanding from dwelling on the qualities of a disagreeable object; and the consequence is, that the understanding, going along with the will, fixes its attention on the aspect preferred by the latter, and, judging by what it sees, its belief is insensibly determined by the inclination of the will.

XIV. Diseases are another source of error; they impair the judgment. And while violent disorders produce sensible changes, I cannot hesitate to believe, that slighter ailments proportionably affect us.

Self-interest is also a wonderful instrument for

putting out our eyes without pain. Justice varies according to our sympathies or antipathies. Only pay a handsome sum to your counsel, when he takes the brief; and how much more forcibly will he be struck with the justice of your cause! And yet I have known some, who, by another perversion of the mind, in order to avoid being affected by motives of self-interest, have acted the most unjust part, from a contrary bias. A sure method of losing a cause, with such persons, would be, to get it recommended to them by their nearest relations.

XV. Justice and truth are two points so extremely delicate, that our blunt instrument cannot touch them; or, if they do, they cover the point, and rest more upon what is false, than upon what is true.

XVI. The imagination often magnifies the smallest objects, by a fanciful mode of estimation, till they fill our whole souls; and, by a rash hardihood, contracts the greatest objects to our own dimensions.

XVII. Not merely old impressions are capable of amusing us: the charms of novelty have the same power. And these are the two sources of all disputes; for men upbraid one another, either with following the false impressions of infancy, or with inconsiderately running after novelties.

Who can preserve the first medium? Let him come forward, and prove it. There is no principle, however natural, and though it has existed from in-

fancy, which men will not assert to be a false impression, either of education or the senses. Because, say some, you have believed from your cradle, that a vessel is empty when you see nothing in it, you hold the possibility of a vacuum: it is a mere illusion of your senses strengthened by habit, which science must dispel. Others, on the contrary, say, you have been taught in the schools, that there is no such thing as a vacuum; and thus your common sense has been perverted, or it would have clearly comprehended the truth: you must correct this erroneous impression, by returning to the primary dictates of nature. Which, we are ready to ask, has deceived us—our senses or education?

XVIII. All the pursuits of men have one object—the acquisition of property: and the title by which they possess it is, in its origin, nothing but the fancy of those who make the laws. They have no power to insure its possession; a thousand accidents may snatch it from them. It is the same with science; disease deprives us of it.

XIX. What, then, are our natural principles, but principles founded on habit? In children, they are what have been received from their parents, as dogs are trained to the chase. A different habit, as experience proves, will give other natural principles; and if there are principles that cannot be effaced by habit, there are also habits not to effaced by nature. This depends on the disposition.

Parents are afraid lest the natural affection of

their children should be lost: what, then, is this nature which is so liable to be effaced? Habit is a second nature which destroys the first. Why is not habit natural? I strongly suspect that this nature itself is but a primary habit, as habit is a second nature.

XX. If we should dream every night the same thing, it would, perhaps, affect us as much as the objects we see every day: and if a mechanic were invariably to dream for twelve hours, every night, that he was a king, I believe he would be almost as happy as a king who should dream twelve hours, every night, that he was a mechanic. Were we to dream every night that we were pursued by enemies, or haunted by frightful spectres; or that we passed all our time in various occupations—in travelling for instance; we should suffer almost as much as if the whole were true; and we should dread going to sleep as much as we should dread to awake, if we apprehended meeting with such misfortunes in actual life. In fact, such dreams would produce almost the same evils as the reality. But because our dreams are all different, and varied, what we see in them, affects us much less than what we see when awake, owing to the continuity of the latter, though that is not so constant and equable as never to change: but it does so less abruptly, except in some remarkable cases, as when travelling, and then we say, "Methinks I am dreaming;" for life is a dream, a little more regular than other dreams.

XXI. We suppose that all men conceive and feel alike respecting objects; but this is a very gratuitous supposition, for we have no proof of it. I observe, indeed, that men use the same words, on similar occasions; that, for example, whenever two men see snow, they both express its appearance by the same word, and call it *white;* and from the conformity in the application of terms, a strong presumption arises of a conformity in ideas; this, however, is not absolutely demonstrative, though the probability is much in favour of the affirmative.

XXII. When we see an effect happen always in the same manner, we infer that it takes place by a natural necessity; as, for instance, that the sun will rise tomorrow; but nature often deceives us, and will not submit to its own rules.

XXIII. Many things really certain, are contradicted; many falsehoods pass without contradiction; contradiction is not a mark of falsehood, nor the absence of it a mark of truth.

XXIV. Reflective men will perceive, that as nature bears the impress of its Maker engraven on all things, they partake of a twofold infinity. And thus we see, that our investigations in all the sciences may be carried on to an unlimited extent. Who can doubt that Geometry, for example, contains an infinite number of propositions not yet discovered? And these propositions must be as unlimited in the multitude and refinement of their principles; for evi-

dently those which have been laid down as ultimate do not depend on themselves, but are supported by others, and these again by others in endless succession.

We see, at the first glance, that Arithmetic alone furnishes principles without number: and so does every other science.

But if an infinity in littleness is far less an object of sense, philosophers have made still greater pretensions of having apprehended it: this is the rock on which they have all split. It serves to explain the origin of those titles now so much in vogue, such as "*Principles of things*," or, "*Principles of Philosophy*," and others of the same sort; as arrogant in fact, though not in appearance, as that, the absurdity of which every one instantly feels, "*De omni scibili*."

Let us not, then, expect to meet with assurance and certainty. Our reason is always deceived by the fluctuating appearances of things; nothing can fix the finite between the two infinites, which enclose, but never touch it. If this fact were clearly understood, I think we should keep ourselves at rest, each in the place where nature places him. Since the middle, which is always distant from the extremes, is our lot, of what avail is it, that man can gain a scantling of additional knowledge? He rises perhaps a little higher; but he will be always infinitely far from the extremes. And is not the duration of the longest life infinitely short of eternity?

Compared with these infinites, all finites are

equal, and I do not see why the imagination should fix upon one rather than another. The very comparison of ourselves with what is infinite, gives us pain.

XXV. The sciences have two extremes which touch one another; the first is that simple native ignorance in which all men are found at their birth; the other, is that to which great minds attain, who having traversed every part of human knowledge, discover that they know nothing, and find themselves placed in that very ignorance from which they set out. But this is a wise ignorance which knows itself. Persons between these two classes who have escaped from their native ignorance, but have not yet reached the other, possess some tincture of satisfactory knowledge, and form the class of men of talent. They disturb the world, and judge worse of every thing than others. The common people, and men of talent, compose, in general, the busy actors of the scene; the rest despise the world, and are despised by it.

XXVI. We fancy ourselves naturally better able to reach the centre of things, than to embrace their circumference. The visible extent of the universe is evidently beyond our grasp, but as we far exceed little things, we fancy that they are more easily acquired. And yet it does not require less capacity to descend to nothing, than to comprehend all things; there must be an infinity in both: and it seems to me, that he who could comprehend the

minutest principles of things, might also attain the knowledge of infinity. One depends on the other, and the one leads to the other. The extremes touch and reunite in consequence of stretching out so far, and meet in God, and in God alone.

If man would begin with the study of himself, he would see how impossible it is to find any objects totally unconnected with himself. How can a part, and such he is, comprehend the whole? Perhaps he aspires to know only those parts of nature to which he bears some proportion. But the parts of the universe are so related and linked together, that, I am persuaded, it is impossible to know one, without knowing another, and in short, without knowing all. Man, for example, is related to every thing he knows. He requires space to contain him, time to exist in, motion in order to live, the elements to compose his frame, heat and food to nourish him, and air for respiration. He sees the light, he feels bodies; in fact, every thing is, in some way or other, connected with him.

Therefore, to know man, we must know why air is necessary to his existence, and to know what air is, we must know why it bears a relation to the life of man.

Flame cannot exist without air; therefore, to know the one we must know the other.

Thus, all things being naturally effects and causes, ends and instruments, directly or indirectly, and held together by a natural though imperceptible tie, which unites objects the most dissimilar and most distant, I consider it to be as impossible to know the parts

without knowing the whole, as to know the whole without knowing the parts in detail.

And what perhaps renders us totally incapable of knowing all things is, that while other objects are essentially simple, we are composed of two heterogeneous natures, soul and body; for it is impossible that the part of us which reasons should be any thing but spiritual: and to presume that we are simply corporeal, would only exclude us more completely from the knowledge of things, since nothing is so inconceivable as the assertion, that matter can know itself.

It is this combination of body and spirit which has occasioned a confusion of ideas among almost all philosophers: they have attributed to body what belongs only to spirit, and to spirit what is true only of body; for they boldly assert that bodies tend downward—that they seek a centre—that they avoid destruction—that they abhor a vacuum—that they have their inclinations, their sympathies, their antipathies, which are all things that are peculiar to spirit. And, in speaking of Spirit, they consider it as occupying space, and have attributed to it motion from one place to another, which are things that belong only to body.

Instead of imbibing the ideas of things as they are, we tinge with the qualities of our compound being all the simple objects we contemplate.

Who would not believe, from observing that we compound every thing of body and spirit, that such an union was perfectly comprehensible? And yet there is nothing we comprehend so little. Man is

to himself the most marvellous object in nature, for he cannot conceive what body is, still less what spirit is, and least of all how body can be united with spirit.

This is the very summit of his difficulties, and yet this is his own being—*Modus quo corporibus adhæret spiritus comprehendi ab hominibus non potest, et hoc tamen homo est.*

XXVII. Man, therefore, is a subject full of errors which are incorrigible without grace. Nothing shows him the truth; every thing deludes him. Reason and the senses, the two principles of truth, besides that they are not always sincere in their search, reciprocally delude each other. The senses delude the reason by false appearances; and the trickery they practise is passed on themselves in return. Reason takes its revenge. The passions of the soul disturb the senses and make them receive false impressions. By turns they deceive and are deceived.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE UNHAPPINESS OF MAN.

NOTHING is better adapted to give us an insight into the misery of mankind, than to consider the true cause of the incessant agitation in which they pass their lives.

The soul is sent into the body to make there a short sojourn. It knows that this is but the introduction to an endless journey, and that the only period allowed for preparation, is the brief duration of the present life, of which the greatest part is yielded to the demands of our natural wants, leaving a very small portion at its own disposal. And then this little remnant so grievously encumbers and perplexes it, that its chief study is to devise expedients for getting rid of that also.

To live with itself, and to think of itself, is insupportably painful. Therefore all its care is to forget itself, and to cause this time, so short and so precious, to glide away without exciting reflection, by attending to things which keep its own condition out of sight.

This is the origin of all the busy pursuits of mankind, and of every thing called diversion or pastime, in which men's real aim is, so to beguile time away, as not to be reminded of it, or rather of themselves; and by this oblivion of life, to escape the bitterness of soul, the internal disgust, which it would inevita-

bly cost them, to employ that time in self-consideration. The soul finds nothing within, to give it content; it sees nothing there, which it can think of without pain. Thus it is forced to go out of itself, seeking by an attention to external objects, to lose the recollection of its real state. Its satisfaction depends on this forgetfulness, and to render it miserable, there needs no more than to compel it to see itself, and to be alone with itself.

Men are trained from infancy, to be anxious about their honour and their property, and even about the property and honour of their relations and friends. We impose upon them the study of languages, of the sciences, of manual exercises, and of the arts. We intrust them with various concerns, and assure them that they can never expect to be happy, if they do not manage by care and industry, to establish their fortune and honour, and even the fortune and honour of their friends; and that if they fail in any one of these objects, they must be miserable. Thus, we force them into tasks and engagements, which harass them from morning till night. A strange expedient all this, say you, for making people happy! What could be better devised to make them unhappy? Do you ask what? Why, just this; relieve them of all these cares: for then they would see themselves, they would think of themselves, and this would be an intolerable grievance. It is seen, accordingly, that if they have any relaxation from their toils, the same spirit prompts them to consume the time in some diversion that will engross their attention and save them from themselves.

For this reason, when I have set myself to consider the various things that agitate mankind, the dangers and vexations to which they expose themselves at courts or in camps, in prosecution of their ambitious projects, which are the origin of so many quarrels, such violent passions, and perilous and fatal enterprises, I have often said, that all the miseries of men arise from not knowing how to be at ease in their closets. A man who has enough to live upon, could he endure his own thoughts, would never spend his life in travel or military adventures; and certainly if a livelihood were his object, such hazardous undertakings would be far from being requisite.

On examining the subject closely, I can trace this aversion in men, to repose and self-converse, to a very adequate cause: it is no other than the natural unhappiness of our frail and mortal condition, which is so wretched, that nothing can console us, when we are not prevented from thinking upon it, and from seeing ourselves.

Let it be remembered, however, that I have been describing the state of those persons only, who look into their own hearts, without having felt the power of religion. For amongst other astonishing facts of the Christian religion, this is one, that it reconciles man to himself in reconciling him to God; it renders the sight of himself supportable; and, under its influence, many find more pleasure in solitude and repose, than in all the various scenes and employments of active life. And it is not by confining man within himself, that all these wonderful effects

are produced; they are brought about, by leading him to God, and supporting him under the sense of his miseries, by the hope of another life in which he will be entirely delivered from them. As for those who are actuated by no higher motives than may be found in themselves, and in human nature, it is impossible that they should be placed in a state of external repose, favourable to self-consideration and self-inspection, without being instantly attacked by chagrin and melancholy. The man, who loves only himself, dislikes nothing so much as solitude. He pursues no object but for his own gratification, and shuns nothing on earth so carefully as himself; for on looking within, he sees that he is not what he would fain be; he discovers a crowd of incurable miseries, and a vacancy of real and substantial good which he cannot fill up.

Imagine any situation whatever, containing all the good things and means of pleasure, which may be supposed capable of satisfying the heart of man; but let an individual be placed there, without occupation or amusement, and left to reflect upon himself; his spirits will droop under this languid felicity, he will inevitably fall into dismal forebodings, and if his attention is not turned to something out of himself, he will necessarily be unhappy.

But has not the possessor of royalty, grandeur sufficient to make him happy, without carrying his views beyond himself? Must he, too, be diverted by other objects, like an ordinary mortal? One is aware, that in common cases, the way to render a man happy, is to engage him with an object that will

make him forget his private troubles; the ambition, for instance, of being a first-rate dancer. But will it be just the same with a king? will *he* be rendered more happy by these frivolous amusements, than by the contemplation of his own grandeur? Can any object, more gratifying, be presented to his mind? And will it not mar his pleasure, if his thoughts are turned to regulating his steps by the cadences of a tune, or to watch the movements of a billiard ball, instead of enjoying at his ease the enchanting spectacle of the glory that surrounds him? Only let the experiment be tried—let a king be left alone, without any object of sensual gratification, or of mental solicitude, without company, at full liberty for solitary reflection, and we shall perceive, that a king who sees himself, is a man full of miseries, affected by them as sensibly as any other human being.

All this, therefore, is carefully provided against; there are never wanting a number of people, about the persons of princes, who take care that diversion shall succeed to business, and who are on the watch, to furnish pleasures and amusements for every leisure moment, that a void may never be felt: in other words, princes are surrounded by persons who take infinite pains that a king shall never be alone, and in a state for self-reflection, aware, that notwithstanding his kingship, if he thinks of that, and of nothing else, he must be miserable.

Thus the chief thing that sustains men in elevated stations, which, on other accounts, are so painful, is, that they are continually diverted from thinking

upon them. Only consider; to be a chief justice, or prime minister, what is it, but to be harassed on all sides with applications, that leave no interval for self-reflection? And when a discarded favourite retires to his country seat, though still in possession of an ample fortune, and with domestics ready to obey every call, he is never happy, because no longer prevented from thinking on himself.

We may account, in the same way, for the pleasure so many persons take, in gaming, hunting, and other diversions, to the exclusion of a thought about any thing else. They do not engage in these pursuits, for the sake of being just so much the happier by what they may gain, or because they imagine their real well-being depends on the money they win, or the game taken in the chase, which they would think scarce worth accepting as a present. No; the tranquil and undisturbed use of things, which would leave time to reflect on their unhappy state, is not what they seek, but the constant agitation that would render reflection impossible. Hence it is that men are so fond of the noise and tumult of the world, that imprisonment is so dreadful a punishment, and that so very few are able to endure solitude.

This is the utmost that men have been able to discover, to make themselves happy. As for those who amuse themselves with exposing the vanity and meanness of the common diversions of mankind, they have indeed detected one source of human misery; and a great one it is—the disposition to take pleasure in objects so mean and despicable; but they cannot know

the root of the evil from which these miseries necessarily spring, as long as they are not cured of that internal and native perversion, which consists in being unable to endure the sight of themselves. To purchase a hare at market, will not secure them from this spectacle, but the chase of the poor animal answers the purpose admirably. So that when plainly told, that what they pursue so ardently cannot satisfy them; that, in short, nothing is more mean and silly, they would allow what we say to be true, if they saw things in the proper light; but, at the same time, would allege that they merely seek for some violent and tumultuary occupation to avert the sight of themselves, and that it is with this design they keep in view an object sufficiently attractive to occupy their entire regard. But their self-ignorance will not permit them to make even this apology.—A man of rank sincerely believes that there is something great and noble in the chase; he will tell you that it is a royal sport; we find that men of all classes are under a similar illusion. They imagine that there is something really and substantially good in the objects they pursue. They feel persuaded, that could they obtain such or such an office, they should then enjoy repose, not being aware, all the while, that their desires are insatiable. They believe that they are sincerely seeking for repose, when, in fact, they are seeking only for agitation.

Mankind have a secret instinct, prompting them to find amusement or occupation in external objects, which springs from a sense of their continual misery. And they have another secret instinct, a vestige of

their original greatness, which assures them that happiness consists really in repose. From the operation of these two contrary instincts, a confused scheme is formed, and lies hid at the bottom of their hearts, which leads them to seek repose by means of action, and to imagine that the satisfaction they want will be obtained, if by surmounting certain obstacles immediately in view, they can open a passage to their supposed resting place.

And thus life passes away. Men combat with a thousand difficulties for the sake of repose, and as soon as they have overcome them all, repose becomes intolerable. For their thoughts are turned either on existing evils, or on such as are impending. And when secure on all sides from danger, their inherent disquietude, destitute of objects it might justly fix upon, still continues to shoot from the heart, its native soil, and overspreads the soul with its venom.

When Cineas told Pyrrhus, who proposed enjoying himself with his friends as soon as he had conquered great part of the world, that he would consult his own happiness much more, by taking up with the repose already at his command, without undergoing the hazards and toils of war in order to obtain it, he advised him to a line of conduct not less difficult, and scarcely more reasonable, than the ambitious project of the young warrior. Both proceeded on the false assumption, that contentment could arise from a man's self, and from present good, without its being requisite to fill the void of the heart with imaginary hopes. Pyrrhus could

not be happy, either before, or after the conquest of the world, and probably the easy life recommended by his prime minister would have given him less satisfaction than even the many wars and expeditions he was planning.

Thus we must be brought to acknowledge, that the human mind is so unhappily disposed as to become weary of itself without any foreign cause, by the very peculiarity of its natural condition; and withal it is so vain and volatile, that when full of a thousand real causes of uneasiness, the merest trifle will divert it. To consider the matter seriously, there is much more reason to lament that mankind can be amused with things so contemptible and frivolous, than that they suffer so much from real miseries, and their diversions are infinitely less rational than their sorrows.

II. What can be the reason that this man, who not long ago lost his only son, and this very morning was engaged almost to distraction in a law-suit, now does not give his troubles a thought? You need not be astonished; he is taken up with watching a stag, which his hounds have been in full chase after, for six hours. However great his distress may have been, in this he finds ample consolation. In short, prevail upon a man to join in any amusement whatever, and as long as that lasts he will be happy: but it will be a false and imaginary happiness, arising not from the possession of real and solid good, but from a levity of spirit, that obliterates the recollection of his real miseries, and fixes his thoughts upon

mean and ridiculous objects, unworthy of his attention, and still less deserving of his love. The delight he feels is that of a distempered man in a frenzy; the result, not of the healthy vigour of his mind, but of its unnatural excitement; it is the laugh of folly and delusion. And it is indeed very striking to observe what it is that pleases men in their sports and diversions. It is true, that by occupying the mind, they deaden the sense of its miseries: so far all is real. But they occupy it only by creating a phantom of the imagination, as an object of devoted attachment.

What object, think you, have those persons in view, who are playing at tennis with such intense ardour and activity? Why, that they may boast to-morrow among their friends of having played better than any one else; this is the main-spring of their eagerness. And so others toil in their closets, to gain the applause of men of science, for resolving an algebraical problem hitherto undetermined. And many, not a jot wiser in my opinion, run the hazard of their lives, that they may boast of having stormed a town. And lastly, others shorten their lives, in noting all these follies, not for the purpose of becoming better men, but to show that they know the vanity of them: and these are the greatest fools of all, for they are so knowingly: whilst we may suppose, respecting the others, that they would not act as they do, were they better informed.

III. A man will pass his time, without feeling it tedious, by playing each day for a small stake, whom

you would make unhappy by giving him every morning, on condition of his not gaming, the money he would otherwise win during the day. Perhaps it will be said, that his object is amusement and not gain. But let him play for nothing, and he would feel, not merely no interest, but actual disgust. Amusement, therefore, is not his only object; a calm and dispassionate amusement would be irksome. He must be animated and put upon his mettle, by imagining that he should be happy in winning what he would refuse to receive, on condition of not playing; and an object of passion must be created, that will excite his desire, his anger, his fears, and his hopes.

We see, then, that the diversions in which mankind place their happiness, are not only contemptible; they are false and deceitful: in other words, they present phantoms and illusions which could never occupy the mind of man, if it had not lost the perception of real good, and a taste for it; and if it were not filled with meanness, vanity, levity, and pride, and an infinite number of other vices. Diversions assuage the sense of our miseries, only by causing more real and substantial misery, for more than any thing else, they prevent self-reflection, and cause our time to elapse unnoticed. Were it not for them, we should be weary of ourselves, and this weariness would lead us to seek for some more effectual method of relief. But diversion deceives and amuses us, and brings us to the grave by imperceptible advances.

IV. Mankind, unable to escape death, trouble, and ignorance, in order to make themselves happy, have hit upon the plan of never thinking about these things; the utmost efforts of their ingenuity can suggest no better consolation for such prodigious evils. But it is most miserable consolation, since it goes not to cure the evil, but merely to conceal it a little while; and by concealing it, prevents men from attempting to obtain a thorough cure.

Thus, by a strange inversion in human nature, that disquietude which is its greatest sensible evil, proves to be its greatest good, since nothing can influence it more powerfully to seek a radical cure; and that diversion which it looks upon as its greatest good is, in fact, its greatest evil, because nothing tends more to draw it off from seeking a remedy for its miseries: while both are striking proofs of the unhappiness and corruption of man, and of his grandeur too; for he would not be disgusted with every thing, nor engage in such a multiplicity of pursuits, if he had not an indistinct conception of the happiness he has lost; but unable to find it in himself, he seeks for it ineffectually in external things, without ever being satisfied, because it cannot be obtained from ourselves nor from any created beings, but is in God alone.

V. Since nature makes us unhappy in every condition our desires imagine a happy state, combining with the state we are in, the pleasures of a state in which we are not: but when we are in possession of these pleasures, we are not happy, because we have

new desires conformed to our notions of another state.

VI. Imagine a number of prisoners all under sentence of death; if some of them were executed every day in sight of the others, the remainder would behold their own fate in that of their companions, and look at one another with anguish and despair, expecting their own turn to come. This represents the condition of mankind.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE STRIKING CONTRARIETIES IN MAN RELATIVE TO TRUTH AND HAPPINESS.

I. NOTHING in human nature is more strange, than the contrarieties it presents in reference to all things. Man is formed to apprehend Truth: he ardently desires it; he pursues it; but when he attempts to grasp it, feels so bewildered and confounded, that whether he has it or not, he cannot tell. This has given rise to the two sects of the Pyrrhonists and Dogmatists, of which the one have attempted to render all human knowledge dubious, and the other have affirmed its absolute certainty; but so inconclusive have been the arguments on both sides, that they but aggravate the confusion and perplexity of the understanding, till the inquirer obtains some better light than that of nature.

What mainly supports the scheme of the Pyrrhonists is this, that apart from faith and Revelation we have no certainty of the first principles of knowledge, unless our having these principles as instinctive sentiments proves their certainty; but, say they, This is not demonstrative of their truth, because, as there is no certainty, independently of Revelation, whether man has been created by a benevolent Deity, or by an evil Spirit, whether he has existed from all eternity, or is the offspring of chance, it is impossible to know to which of these supposed origins of

our nature, these inherent principles are conformable; whether they are wholly true, as implanted by a Being of infinite rectitude and benevolence, or wholly false, as inserted in our frame by a malignant author of our being; or vague and equivocal, as they would be on the supposition of our having received them together with our being, from chance. They allege besides, that no one has any assurance, except his mere belief, that he is asleep rather than awake; for during sleep we are as firmly persuaded we are awake, as when we are not sleeping. We believe that we see distances, figures, and motions; we notice the lapse of time, and, in short, seem to act just as when we are awake. Since then we pass a portion of our lives in what we term sleep, and conceive that, during that time, we have no sense of truth or reality, the whole being a series of illusions, who can tell whether that other portion of life in which we believe we are awake, be not in fact, only another kind of slumber from which we awake in that change which we call going to sleep; as we sometimes dream that we are dreaming, heaping one fancy on another.

I do not stop to notice the observations of the Pyrrhonists on the fallacious impressions of custom and education, of climate and national manners, and other things of the same kind; which, however destitute of solidity, most men are induced to take as the basis of their opinions.

The strong-hold of the Dogmatists is this, that if men will only speak honestly, they must allow that there are certain natural principles which it is

impossible to disbelieve. "We know truth," say they, "not merely by a process of reasoning, but by instinctive feeling—by a luminous and vivid intuition: it is in this way we possess the knowledge of first principles." They do not depend on reasoning, which, therefore, it is useless to employ in combating them. The Pyrrhonists, who aim to overturn them by argumentation, labour in vain. We *know* that we are not dreaming, however impossible it may be to prove the fact. Our incapacity to do this evinces the feebleness of our reason; but not, as they pretend, the uncertainty of all our notions: for the knowledge of first principles, as, for example, our ideas of *space*, *time*, *motion*, *number*, or *matter*, is as certain as any of the results of our reasoning faculty. These natural dictates, these primary sentiments, are the very ground-work which reasoning itself must assume, and proceed upon in all its operations. I have the perception, independent of reasoning, that space has three dimensions, and that numbers are infinite; but it is by reasoning I demonstrate that there are no two square numbers of which one is double the other. We *feel* the truth of first principles, but *infer* the truth of propositions: an assurance of truth exists in both cases, though obtained in different ways. It is as absurd for reason to demand from the intuitive sense the proofs of first principles, before it will assent to them, as it would be for the intuitive sense to demand from reason a perception of the truth of all the propositions that are capable of demonstration. The proper effect of this inability should be, to

humble the pride of that reason which would make itself the universal arbiter of truth, and not to unsettle our belief, as if nothing but reason could instruct us. Would to God, on the contrary, that we could dispense with it entirely, and that we had all our knowledge by instinct and intuition! But this is a privilege nature will not grant: an extremely small portion of our knowledge is received through this channel; all the rest must be acquired by reasoning.

Thus, then, men are ranged in an open warfare of opinions. Every one must take a part, and side either with the Dogmatists or Pyrrhonists: whoever attempts to stand neuter, will be most absolutely a Pyrrhonist; for such neutrality is of the very essence of Pyrrhonism: he who is not against it, is emphatically for it. But, in this alternative, what is man to do? Is he to doubt whether he sleeps, whether he feels pain when pinched or burned? Is he to doubt whether he doubts? Is he to doubt of his own existence? He cannot go so far: and I will venture to assert, that there never was a real and complete Pyrrhonist. Nature comes in as the guardian of our feeble reason, and saves it from running into such extravagance. But, on the contrary, will any man say that he possesses the certainty of truth? he, who if urged a little to the proof, soon finds he can give none, and is forced to surrender his boasted assurance?

Who can produce concord in this war of principles? Nature confounds the Pyrrhonists, and reason confounds the Dogmatists. Unhappy Man!

who seekest to comprehend thy real condition by thy unassisted reason! Thou canst not avoid joining one or other of these sects, nor continue fixed in either. Such is man in respect to truth.

Let us next consider man in reference to Happiness, that object pursued with such ardour in all his actions: for all men, without exception, wish to be happy. However different the means they employ, they all aim at this. This is the motive which impels one man to enter the army, and another to remain at home. One desire is common to both, but directed by different views. Every movement of the will is towards this object. It is the primary motive of all the actions of all mankind, not excepting those who hang or drown themselves: and yet, through all ages, no one, otherwise than by faith, ever attained this end. All are confessing they are unhappy. Princes and subjects, nobles and plebeians, old and young, the strong and the weak, the wise and the ignorant, the healthy and the sick; of all countries, of all times, of all ages, and of all conditions.

Experience, so long, so general, and so uniform, might well convince us that we cannot obtain happiness by our own efforts; but we refuse to receive the lesson taught by so immense an assemblage of examples. In every instance of other men's experience, we descry some circumstance different from our own; and, on the strength of this difference, however slight, we promise ourselves, that for this once, at least, we shall not be disappointed. The present never satisfies us, the future deludes us:

and thus we are led on, through one misery after another, till we meet with death, a greater evil than all those from which it sets us free.

It is a strange thing that there is nothing in nature which has not been supposed capable of being the supreme end and happiness of man: the stars, the elements, plants, animals, insects, maladies, wars, vices, and crimes—all have been tried. Man is fallen, and therefore is deluded into the pursuit of any object. Since he has lost the true good, every thing else beguiles him with the appearance of it; self-destruction not excepted, directly contrary as that is both to reason and nature.

Some men have sought for happiness in power, others in curious researches and the sciences, others in sensual indulgences. The desires peculiar to these three classes have divided mankind into three sects: and those who are called philosophers have, in reality, only followed one of them. Those who have had the most correct notions on the subject, have perceived that the universal good which all men desire and may equally claim, cannot consist in any particular object which but one person could possess, and which, if divided, would pain its possessors, more by the want of the part they had not, than it would afford content by the enjoyment of that which might actually fall to their lot. The persons I refer to, have perceived that the true good must be such that all may possess it at the same time, without diminution, and without jealousy; and that no one should lose it against his inclination. So far they have understood its nature, but still they have not found it;

and, instead of a substantial and real good, have embraced the vain phantom of an imaginary virtue.

We have an instinctive perception that happiness must be found within ourselves. Our passions impel us outward, even when not attracted by external objects. On the other hand, external objects tempt and allure us, though we are not thinking on them. So that philosophers may repeat till they are tired, *Enter into yourselves, and there you will find your real good;* men in general will not believe them, and those who do, are the emptiest and silliest of mankind. For what can be more vain and ridiculous than the pretensions of the Stoics? what more false than the whole train of their reasonings? They suppose that men can do always what they do sometimes; and, that since, in some instances, the love of glory has been productive of benefit to those who indulged that passion, it may be equally advantageous to others. These are convulsive movements which health cannot imitate.

II. The internal war of reason against the passions, has divided those who wish to obtain tranquillity into two sects. The one have attempted to get rid of their passions and to become gods; the other have attempted to get rid of their reason and to become brutes. But neither have succeeded in attaining their object. Reason always remains to upbraid the baseness and injustice of the passions, and to trouble the repose of those who are abandoned to them: and the passions maintain a perpetual vigour, even in those who would fain renounce them.

III. This is the utmost man can attain by his unassisted efforts, in relation to truth and happiness. We have an inability to demonstrate, which all the dogmatism in the world cannot remove; we have an idea of truth, that all the Pyrrhonism in the world cannot destroy. We long for truth, but find nothing in ourselves but uncertainty. We seek for happiness, and find nothing but misery. We cannot help wishing for truth and happiness, but we are incapable of obtaining either certainty or happiness. This desire is left in our bosoms, as much to punish us, as to make us perceive from what height we are fallen.

IV. If Man is not made for God, how is it that he can be happy only in God? If Man *is* made for God, how is it that he is so opposed to God?

V. Man knows not in what order of beings to rank himself. He is evidently out of the right path, and perceives in himself the traces of a happy state from which he is fallen, and which he cannot recover. He gropes in every direction, restless and unsuccessful, amidst impenetrable darkness.

This is the source of the disputes of philosophers, some of whom attempted to elevate man by exhibiting his grandeur, others to abase him by depicting his miseries. And, what is most striking to observe, each party has employed the arguments advanced by the other, to support their own opinions. For the misery of man has been inferred from his grandeur, and his grandeur has been inferred from his misery. Thus the fact of his misery has been ren-

dered more apparent by the consideration of his original grandeur, and his original grandeur has been evinced more strongly from the exhibition of his present wretchedness. All that one party has been able to say in demonstration of his grandeur, has only served the other as a proof of his wretchedness; since a being must be wretched in proportion to the elevation from which he falls: while the former, again, have deduced his original grandeur from his present state of degradation. Thus the two parties have argued in a perpetual circle: for it is an indubitable fact, that in proportion as men's minds become enlightened, they discover more both of the misery and the grandeur of their nature. In a word, man knows that he is miserable: then he is miserable, for he knows that he is so; but he is very great, because he *knows* that he is miserable.

What a chimera, then, is man! what a novelty! what a chaos! what a compound of inconsistencies! A judge of all things, yet a feeble earth-worm: a depository of truth, yet a heap of uncertainty: the glory, and the outcast of the universe. If he magnifies himself, I abase him; if he abases himself, I magnify him; and persist in contradicting him, till he admit that he is an incomprehensible monster.*

* In an article of the Edinburgh Review, attributed to the most philosophic statesman of the present day, this chapter is referred to in the following terms:—"With all the merits of that treatise (Buffier on First Truths) it is little more than an expansion of that immortal fragment, where the genius of Pascal has assembled, in the space of two pages, all that ever has been, or ever can be said, for and against universal Scepticism." Edin. Review, Vol. XXXVI. p. 261.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE NECESSITY OF STUDYING RELIGION.

The least that may justly be required of those who are inclined to hostility against Religion is, that they should first take care to understand what its pretensions really are. Were it so extravagant as to boast that it gives an entirely clear and unclouded manifestation of the Deity, a conclusive argument might be brought against it, from the incontrovertible fact, that there is actually no such manifestation in the world. But when, on the contrary, it declares, that men are in darkness and estrangement from God; that he is concealed from their knowledge, and that even one of the titles given him in Scripture is, a "God that hideth himself;" and when, in fine, it affirms and insists equally upon these two things, namely, That God has fixed competent marks in his church, that he may be discovered by those who sincerely seek him, and that, nevertheless, these marks are so far concealed, that they can be perceived only by those who seek him with all their hearts: when the case is so, I would ask those persons who do not so much as pretend to exert any serious diligence, in order to ascertain the truth respecting religion, how they can think they are bringing an argument against religion, in protesting they do not find it true, when the very fact of their perceiving no evidence serves to establish one of the two points above-

mentioned, and does not affect the other; and thus, instead of subverting, confirms the doctrine of the church.

To give any validity to their opposition, they must be able to declare, that they have spared no efforts to discover the truth; that they have listened to every thing the church itself offers for their information, and still without obtaining satisfaction. When they can assert all this, they may, with good reason, dispute one of its pretensions. I hope, however, to show, that no person of sound understanding can make such an assertion, and even venture to say, that no one has ever made it. We know very well how people of this turn proceed. They will have it, that they have made extraordinary efforts to inform themselves, when they have spent a few hours over the Bible, and propounded some questions to an ecclesiastic on the articles of faith. They then assure us, with infinite satisfaction, as if they had actually demonstrated the falsehood of religion; that they have sought, both among books and men, for the evidences of its truth, but cannot find them. Really, I must tell them what I have often said, that this light-hearted presumption is insufferable. The question they so easily dispose of, is not a trifle relating to some person with whom they have no concern: it is a question that affects themselves, and their all. The immortality of the soul concerns us so profoundly, that it would argue the want of all right feeling to be indifferent about its truth. The whole course of our thoughts and actions must be so different, according as there is or

is not an eternal good to be hoped for, that it is impossible to act on rational principles, without being regulated, every moment, by our belief on this point, and making it our chief concern.

Our main interest and prime duty must be, to be rightly informed respecting a fact on which our whole scheme of life depends. And for this reason, I look upon the difference as immense between those persons who are labouring with all their might to know the truth, and those who, equally destitute of information, will not trouble themselves with a thought about it.

I feel nothing but compassion for those who sincerely lament their state of doubt, look upon it as the worst of evils, and, sparing no pains, make it their principal and most serious business to be freed from it.

But as for those who pass through life without thinking of its final termination, and who merely, because they do not find sufficient evidence in their own breasts to convince them, neglect all inquiry, and refuse to examine whether this doctrine is one of those notions which the credulity of the multitude keeps afloat, or one of those truths which, though obscure in their own nature, rest, nevertheless, on the firmest basis: such persons I regard in a totally different light. Their carelessness on a subject which concerns themselves, their eternity, and their all, excites anger, rather than compassion: it astonishes and confounds me; it is absolutely monstrous. And let them not set this down for the extravagance of an enthusiastic devotee: it is a conclu-

sion, I assert, that might be formed on the principles of self-love and of common prudence; it is agreeable to the simplest dictates of reason, and lies within the reach of the most moderate capacity.

It requires no extraordinary enlargement of mind to be sensible, that there can be no true and solid satisfaction in the present state; that all our pleasures are but vanity; that our grievances are innumerable; and that, finally, death, which threatens us every instant, will consign us, within a few years, or it may be, within a few days, to an eternal state of happiness or of misery, or to annihilation. Between us and heaven, hell, or annihilation, there is nothing but life, the frailest of all things; and as heaven will certainly not be the portion of those who doubt whether their souls are immortal, such persons have nothing to expect but hell or annihilation.

Nothing is more positively a fact, than that this is our situation; and nothing is more terrible. Let us carry ourselves as high as we please, behold here the end of whatever may be deemed the most fortunate worldly life.

It is in vain that men turn their thoughts away from the eternity that awaits them, as if they could annihilate it, by not thinking of it. It is a reality, whether they will have it so or not: it is continually approaching, and death, by which they must enter it, will shortly place them under the dire necessity of being either eternally annihilated, or eternally unhappy!

How tremendous are the consequences depending on this state of uncertainty! Surely, to be in such a state is, of itself, a mighty evil; and no duty can be

more imperative than to endeavour earnestly to have the question decided. So that he who doubts, but seeks not to have his doubts resolved, is at once the most criminal and most unhappy of mortals. If, together with this, he is tranquil and satisfied, if he is vain of his tranquillity, and makes his state a topic of mirth and self-gratulation, I have not words to describe so insane a creature.

Whence can such sentiments be derived? What matter of joy can there be in looking forward to nothing but remediless woe? What aliment for vanity to find one's self involved in impenetrable darkness; or what consolation in expecting, never, in the whole range of our existence, to meet with a consoler?

Such repose, in such ignorance, is monstrous. To make those who are passing their lives in it, sensible of its extravagance and stupidity, we will exhibit what passes in their own minds, and confound them, if possible, by a view of their folly. We may suppose that men's thoughts take some such course as the following, when they consent to live in ignorance of their situation, and reject the means of obtaining light upon it.—

"I know not who has placed me in this world, nor what the world is, nor myself. I am fearfully ignorant of all things. I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor even my soul: for this part of me, which thinks what I am now saying, which reflects on every thing and on itself, knows not itself any better than other things. I behold the universe extending to an awful immensity, and myself fixed in

a corner of it, without knowing why I was placed in this spot rather than in any other, or why the little time allotted me to live is fixed in this point of duration, rather than in any other in the eternity past or the eternity to come. I see infinities on all sides, which ingulf me as an atom, as a shadow which lasts an instant, and is seen no more. All I know is, that I must soon die; but the very thing that I understand the least, is this inevitable death.

As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I am going. I only know, that whenever I leave this world, I shall fall either into annihilation, or into the hands of an offended Deity; and that I am ignorant which of these two is my eternal destination.

Such is my state; full of misery, helplessness, and darkness. And from the whole, my conclusion is, that I may as well go on without a thought of what will be my lot, and just follow my inclinations without reflection or anxiety, though in a course which I am aware will insure my falling into eternal misery, should there really be such a state. Possibly I might find something to clear up my doubts, if I sought for it; but I am not disposed to take the trouble of making one effort of inquiry; and treating with contempt those who give themselves any trouble about the matter, I am resolved to advance without forethought or inquietude, to the great experiment of futurity, and wish to amuse myself along the road to death, uncertain of what will be my condition to all eternity." Truly it is to the honour of religion, to have for its adversaries men

so bereft of reason; their opposition, far from being formidable, bears testimony to its most distinguishing truths. For the great object of the Christian religion is to establish the corruption of our nature, and the redemption by Jesus Christ. Now, such men, if they do not evince the truth of redemption by the sanctity of their lives, give flagrant evidence of the corruption of human nature, by sentiments so perfectly the reverse of a right condition of the soul.

Nothing is so important to man as his own state—nothing so awful as eternity. Therefore, for men to be indifferent to the loss of their being, or to the hazard of eternal misery, indicates a most perverted disposition. They display no such apathy in any other concern. They keep their apprehensions awake against even the most trifling harms, and are distressed when they happen; and yet the man who, for days and night together, will be enraged and distracted for the loss of a place, or for some imaginary insult, is the very same man who knows he is going to lose every thing at death; and, notwithstanding, feels no emotion of alarm or anxiety. This strange insensibility to concerns the most awful, in a heart so sensitive to the merest trifles, is a monstrous phenomenon, an incomprehensible fascination, a preternatural lethargy.

A man in prison, who knows not whether the warrant be signed for his execution, and has only an hour for informing himself, but that hour probably sufficient to procure a pardon, would act most unnaturally if he employed this short period, not in taking

measures to escape his doom, but in jollity and mirth. The persons I have been describing are in a similar situation, with this difference, that the evils which menace them are far other and weightier than the mere loss of life, or a punishment that will soon be over. Yet, having hood-winked themselves to hide the precipice from their view, they madly run towards it, and laugh at those who warn them of their danger.

Thus, not only the devout earnestness of those who are seeking God, but also the blindness of those who are not seeking him, and live in awful unconcern, furnishes proof of the truth of religion. Surely some strange catastrophe must have befallen our nature, to make it possible for men to live in such a state; and still more to render them capable of being vain of it. For supposing them quite certain, that the worst they had to fear after death was annihilation, would not even that be a cause for desperation rather than for self-complacency? Is it not enormous folly, then, that having no assurance even of that, they can glory in an uncertainty, that implies the possibility of something far more dreadful than annihilation.

Yet it is a fact, that the soul of man is so perverted, as to be capable of taking some pleasure in this uncertainty. This irrational composure in the view of the alternative of hell or annihilation appears so fine a thing, that not only do those who have actually surrendered themselves to this miserable scepticism make a boast of it, but even those who have not, will affect to be unbelievers for the sake of re-

putation. For experience shows, that the greater proportion of professed unbelievers are of this latter class, mere counterfeits of the character. They have been made to believe, that this riddance of prejudice and superstition is indispensable to the accomplished man of the world. This is what they call, *shaking off the yoke;* and most of them assume the airs of an infidel, merely to be in the fashion.

If, however, they have the least remains of common sense, it will not be difficult to convince them that they have taken the wrong method to increase their reputation. It is not thus they will gain esteem among even worldly men of sound judgment: these will tell them, that the only way to secure a good name, is to be upright, faithful, discreet, and ready to serve one's friends; because men naturally love what contributes to their own advantage. But what hope of advantage do we conceive from hearing it said, that a man has thrown off the yoke, that he believes there is no God to inspect his actions, that he looks on himself as sole master of his own conduct, and accountable to no other authority? Does he imagine that, by all this, he has made sure of our confiding in him henceforward, so that we shall have recourse to him, in every exigency, for advice, succour, and consolation? Does he imagine we shall be delighted by his telling us, that he doubts whether our souls are anything but a little air or vapour; perhaps putting on, at the same time, an air of pleasantry and superior sagacity? If this were true, would it be a thing to speak of with gaiety, and not rather with profound regret, as the most melancholy consideration in the world?

If these persons would give the subject a serious thought, they would perceive that their conduct is so ill-judged, so contrary to good sense, so inconsistent with sound principle, and so little in any way expressive of that nobleness of spirit of which they desire the credit, that nothing is more likely to expose them to general aversion and contempt, and to stamp their character with imbecility and absurdity. And, in fact, could we bring them to give an account of their sentiments, and of the reasons of their scepticism, their allegations would be so frivolous and contemptible, as to confirm, rather than weaken our faith. It was after some such exposition of their tenets, that a person once said, shrewdly enough, among a set of freethinkers, "Talk a little longer at this rate, and really you will make me a sound believer." And with very good reason; for who would not revolt from opinions by which he finds he must be linked to such degraded companions?

As for those who are mere hypocrites in unbelief, they suffer the wretchedness of a forced repression of their genuine feelings, which only makes them the most absurd of mortals. If they are really distressed at being so much in the dark respecting futurity, let them not disown it. The avowal of the fact would be no disgrace. Nothing is so just a cause for shame, as to be without it where it ought to be felt. Nothing more plainly shows an extreme want of sense, than not to apprehend what a melancholy thing it is for a man to be without God in the world: nothing more unquestionably proves a contemptible shallowness and levity of

spirit, than not to wish, at least, that promises of eternal happiness may be true. No courage can be so spurious and besotted, as that which maintains itself against the Almighty. Let persons who are not at heart disciples of infidelity, leave these impieties to those who can indulge them without affectation. Let them, at least, be honest men, if they cannot yet be Christians; and let them acknowledge that the matter plainly comes to this, that there are only two classes of men who deserve to be called rational; namely, those who are serving God with their whole heart, because they know him; and those who are seeking him with their whole heart, because they know him not.

For persons who are seeking after God, who are sensible of their misery, and long to escape from it, it is right that we should labour to assist them in obtaining that illumination which, as yet, they have not.

But as for those who live without knowing God or seeking him, so little do they judge themselves worthy of their own care, that they hardly deserve any from others; and it needs all the charity of the religion they despise, not to despise them, and leave them to their infatuation. But since this religion obliges us to consider them, while in this life, as capable of receiving that grace which would enlighten them even so effectually as, in a short time, to render them stronger in faith than ourselves; and that, on the other hand, it is possible for us to fall into a blindness like theirs; it is our duty to act towards them as it would be desirable that they should act

towards us, supposing the case reversed: we must conjure them to have pity on themselves, and, at least, to make some efforts whether they may not obtain illumination. Let them be persuaded to give to the perusal of this work some of those hours which would be otherwise uselessly spent. It is possible they may meet with something for their advantage; and, at all events, they can be no great losers. As for those who bring with them minds perfectly sincere, and desirous of knowing the truth, I trust they will obtain satisfaction, and be convinced of the truth of our divine religion, by the arguments here brought together to prove it.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

A Dialogue between a Sceptic and a Believer.

S. On the principles of reason, it appears that if there be a God, he must be totally incomprehensible; for, having neither parts nor limits, he can bear no relation to finite beings. We are therefore incapable of knowing what he is, or even whether he exists. And this being the case, who can undertake to determine the question? Certainly not ourselves, whose nature, it is evident, has no relation to that of Deity.

B. I shall not, on this occasion, attempt to prove the existence of the Deity, the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and other truths of the same class, by arguments purely rational: not only because it seems impossible (for myself at least) to deduce proofs from nature sufficient to convince hardened Atheists; but also, because this knowledge, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is barren and useless. Let a man be persuaded that the proportions of numbers are spiritual eternal truths, dependent on a primary truth in which they subsist, and which we term God; yet, after all, he has not made much progress towards his salvation.

S. It is a strange thing, that no canonical author has ever made use of philosophical arguments to

prove the existence of the Deity: they all aim at producing the belief of it, yet none of them has any where said, There is no vacuum; therefore, there is a God. They must have been superior to the ablest writers, since their times, who have all made use of such arguments.

B. If it is a mark of weakness to attempt the demonstration of the existence of the Deity, from the nature of things, do not reproach the Scripture, in which, as you allow, nothing of the kind is to be found: if it is a mark of wisdom to be aware of the difficulties attending such a mode of proof, reverence the inspired writers for possessing that mark.

S. Unity joined to infinity, does not augment it, any more than a foot added to an infinite length. The finite is lost in the infinite, and becomes a simple nonentity. Thus the human intellect shrinks into nothing before the divine mind—thus our rectitude vanishes, when compared with the rectitude of God. The disproportion is not so great between unity and infinity, as between our rectitude and that of God.

B. We may know that an infinity exists, and at the same time, its nature may be incomprehensible. Thus, for example, we know it to be false that numbers are finite, and therefore infer that they are infinite. But that infinity itself we do not comprehend. It cannot be even, it cannot be odd; for if we add unity, its nature will not be changed; yet it is a number, and every number is either even or odd, every finite number at least. We may then, know assuredly, that there is a God, though we know

not what he is: and you ought not to conclude that there is no God, because we cannot perfectly comprehend his nature. To convince you of the divine existence, I will not appeal to that faith which renders it impossible for *us* to doubt it, nor to all those proofs we possess, which your mind, in its present state, is ill-fitted to receive. I would argue on principles admitted by yourself; and shall undertake to show you, by the mode of your reasoning every day on things of far inferior moment, in what manner you ought to reason on this infinitely important question, and which side you ought to take in deciding on the truth or falsehood of the existence of the Deity. You assert, then, that we are incapable of knowing that God exists. Now, it is certain that either there is a God, or there is not; there is no other alternative. But which side shall we take? Reason, again you assert, can do nothing towards deciding the point. A chaos of infinity separates man from God. At this infinite distance the game is played, whether it will turn up *cross* or *pile*; which do you wager? By reason, you cannot be certain of either; by reason, you cannot deny either. Do not blame those who have made a choice, for that they have acted unwisely, and made a bad choice, is more than you can tell.

S. I blame them not for choosing either one side or the other, but for making any choice whatever: he who takes *cross*, and he who takes *pile*, are both wrong: not to wager at all would be most proper.

B. Yes, but you must wager: it is not left to your option to be neutral: not to wager that there

is a God, is to wager that there is no God. Which then do you choose? Consider which will be most for your own interest: there are two things you may fail to gain, truth and the supreme good; you have two things to pledge, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness: and your nature has two things to avoid, error and misery. Do not hesitate then, to decide in the affirmative. Your reason will not be shocked by choosing one in preference to the other, since a choice must be made: that is a settled point. But your happiness: are you alarmed for that? Weigh the gain and the loss: by taking the affirmative, if you gain, you gain all; if you do not gain, you lose nothing. Oh! then, believe, if you can, that there is a God.

S. This is very forcible: I must believe; and yet I hesitate; shall I not hazard too much?

B. Consider; if there were two lives to be gained for one, on an equal chance of gain or loss, you would certainly not hesitate to wager. And if ten lives might be gained, would you not be foolish not to hazard your single life to gain ten, supposing the chances were equal? But here there are an infinity (so to speak) of infinitely happy lives to be gained, with an equal chance, as you allow, of gaining and losing: the stake, too, is an inconsiderable thing, which cannot be long at your disposal: to be chary therefore about parting with it now would be absurd. Nor is it any real objection to say, that the gain is uncertain, but the hazard certain; and that the infinite distance which exists between the certainty of what is hazarded, and the uncertainty of what may

be gained, equalizes the finite good of which the risk is certain, and the infinite good of which the winning is uncertain. This is not a fair statement of the case: every gamester risks a certainty to gain an uncertainty, and yet he risks a finite good, to gain another finite good, without acting irrationally. It is not true that there is an infinite distance between the certainty of what he risks, and the uncertainty of what he hopes to gain. There is, indeed, an infinite distance between the certainty of winning, and the certainty of losing. But the uncertainty of gaining, is in proportion to the certainty of what is risked, according to the proportion of the chances of gain and loss: and hence, if the chances on both sides are equal, the risks are equal; the certainty of what we risk, in such a case, is equal to the uncertainty of the prize, instead of being infinitely distant from it. And our assertion acquires infinite force, when as in the present case, what is only finite, is hazarded on even chances of gain and loss, for what is infinite. This is demonstration: and if mens' minds can admit any truth on rational grounds, they must admit this.

S. I feel the force or your reasoning. But are there no means of being better acquainted with the final issue of the game?

B. Yes, there are the Scriptures, and all the multifarious proofs of our religion.

S. Those who hope for salvation, you say, are happy; but have they not as a counterpoise, the fear of hell?

B. But who has most reason to fear hell? he who

doubts of its existence, and is certain of damnation, if it does exist? or he who firmly believing its existence, enjoys also the hope of being saved from it? Supposing a man under sentence of death had only eight days to live according to law, he would surely be totally devoid of understanding not to consider death as something more than a possibility. But if our passions did not delude us, eight days and a hundred years would be the same thing in an estimate of our whole existence.

And what evil will follow your deciding to believe? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, beneficent, upright, and sincere. It is true, you must relinquish some hurtful pleasures; you must renounce the splendours and amusements of the world: but do you think that you will gain no others? I assure you, that you will be a gainer, even as to this life, and that every step you take in this path, will show you, with greater clearness, the certainty of the gain and the nothingness of the risk, till at last you will know, without the shadow of a doubt, that you have made the venture for a certain and an infinite good, and surrendered a mere nothing to obtain it.

S. Well; but my hands are tied, and my mouth stopped: you would compel me to venture, and I am not at liberty to do it; you give me no rest, and yet, such is the state of my mind, that I cannot believe: what then must I do?

B. Be convinced, at least, of your inability to believe, since reason dictates that you should believe, and yet you cannot. Endeavour to attain conviction, not by accumulating evidence of the existence

of the Deity, but by diminishing the violence of your passions. You wish to enter into the faith, but you know not the road; you wish to be cured of your unbelief, and you inquire for the remedy: learn, then, of those who were once such as you are, but who are now free from doubt. They know the road you wish to take; they are cured of the disease of which you wish to be cured. Copy the manner in which they set out; imitate their external actions, if you cannot as yet enter into their internal dispositions; quit those vain amusements which have so enchanted you. I would soon quit these pleasures, say you, if I had faith. And I, on the other hand, tell you, that you would soon have faith, if you quitted these pleasures. But it is for you to begin. If I could, I would give you faith; but I cannot, and, consequently, cannot apply a test to the truth of what you say: but you can very well quit these pleasures, and prove that what I say is true.

S. These sentiments overpower and delight me.

B. If these sentiments have given you pleasure, and impressed your mind, be assured, that they come from a man who, both before and after he uttered them, bowed himself in prayer to that infinite Being to whom he surrenders his whole soul, and implored that he would cause you to make a similar surrender for your own good and for his glory; that thus his Almightiness might adapt itself to your weakness.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARKS OF THE TRUE RELIGION.

I. THE true religion must enforce the duty of love to God. Nothing can be more just than this, and yet no religion but ours has enjoined it. The true religion must recognize the propensity of man to evil, and his inability to attain virtue by his unassisted efforts. It must also furnish the remedies for these maladies, of which prayer will be the principal. All this our religion has done: no other ever instructed men to seek from God the power to love and to imitate him.

II. A knowledge of human nature is essential to the true religion; for the nature of man, his highest good, true virtue, and true religion, are so connected, that neither of them can be fully known apart from the rest: it must also be acquainted with the grandeur and the degradation of man, and the causes of both. What religion, besides the Christian, can pretend to such comprehensive views?

III. The systems of paganism were well adapted to the common people, for they consisted wholly of external rites; but that very circumstance rendered them unfit for the reflective and philosophic.

A religion purely intellectual might suit cultivated minds, but would be entirely useless to the

generality. The Christian religion alone is suited to all, being composed of what is external, and of what is internal. It elevates the people to what is internal, while it brings down the loftiest minds to what is external: and to this two-fold applicability it is indebted for its perfection; for it is befitting that the uneducated should rise from the letter to the spirit, and that the intellectual, by practising external rites, should submit their spirit to the letter.

IV. We are hateful: reason may convince us of this. But no religion, besides the Christian, has enjoined man to hate himself. No other, therefore, should be received by those who know they deserve to be hated. No religion but the Christian has fully recognized the fact, that, of all beings on the globe, man is the most excellent, and, at the same time, the most miserable. Those systems which have best apprehended the reality of his excellence, have looked upon the natural emotions of shame and guilt as mean and unbecoming; while others, whose abettors have clearly perceived the reality of our degradation, have treated with scorn those lofty sentiments which are equally natural to man. No religion, except ours, has declared that man is born in sin: no sect of philosophers has said so: not one, therefore, has spoken the truth.

V. God is concealed from man: therefore, every religion which does not assert this fact, is false: and every religion which admits it, but does not explain its cause, is essentially defective. Our religion is

free from both these objections. This religion, which consists in believing that man is fallen from a state of excellence and communion with his Maker, to a state of sorrow, remorse, and distance from God; but that he will at last be restored by the Messiah, has always existed in the world. All other things have passed away, but this, to subserve which they existed, remains. For God having designed to form for himself a holy people, whom he would separate from all nations, deliver from their enemies, and bring into a place of safety, declared that he would do this, and come into the world for the purpose; and predicted by his prophets the time and manner of his coming. Meanwhile, to encourage the hopes of his chosen, through successive ages, he exhibited this event in types and figures, and never left them without assurances of his power and determination to save them. Soon after the creation, Adam was made the witness and depository of the promise of a Saviour to be born of woman. And though mankind, in the first ages of the world, could not have forgotten the creation and the fall, and the promise of a Redeemer; yet as, at that early period, men had given way to all kinds of wickedness, holy men were raised up from time to time, such as Enoch, Lamech, and others, who waited patiently for the Messiah promised in the beginning. Noah witnessed the depravity of man at its height, and was saved amidst the universal deluge by a miracle; which distinctly showed the power and intention of God to save the world, and to ensure the birth of the promised seed. That miraculous intervention sufficed to confirm the

hopes of the faithful; and while the remembrance of it was fresh in their minds, God renewed his promises to Abraham, living in the midst of idolaters, and revealed to him the mystery of the future Messiah.

In the times of Isaac and Jacob, idolatry was again spread over the earth: but those holy men lived in faith: and Jacob, while blessing his children on his death-bed, exclaimed with devout transport, referring to the Messiah, "I have waited for thy salvation, O God!" Gen. xlix. 18.

The Egyptians, who were infected with idolatry and magic, seduced God's chosen people by their example. But Moses and a few others believed on him whom they saw not, and adored him, in expectation of those eternal blessings that were in reserve for them.

The Greeks and Romans maintained the worship of false divinities: the poets constructed various mythologies: the philosophers were divided into a thousand different sects: but all the while, there were in Judea chosen individuals, who predicted the coming of that Messiah who was unknown to the rest of mankind.

At last, in the fulness of time, he came: and since his appearance, amidst so many sects and schisms, the overthrow of so many states, and so many total revolutions, that church, which adores Him whom it has always adored, has subsisted without interruption. And what is surpassingly wonderful and divine, this church, which has always continued to exist, has always been opposed. A thousand times it has been

at the brink of destruction, and as often God has rescued it by extraordinary interpositions of his power; and, what is equally astonishing, it has maintained itself without bending and submitting to the will of tyrants.

VI. States would be destroyed if they did not often accommodate their laws to circumstances: the Christian church has never been forced to this expedient, or voluntarily adopted it. But these accommodations to the times must be made, or their use superseded by miracles. It is not strange that human constitutions should be preserved by compliances, though, in that case, they can hardly be said to maintain themselves; yet, after all, they perish sooner or later—not one has lasted five hundred years. That this religion should always have maintained its ground with perfect inflexibility, is a striking proof of its divine origin.

VII. If the truth had no visible marks, the obscurity would be too great: one admirable mark is, that it has always been preserved in a church, and a visible assembly. If, on the other hand, there were perfect unity of sentiment in the church, the evidence would be too great; but to ascertain the truth, we have only to find out what it is that has always existed in the church; for we may be assured, that falsehood is changeable and transitory, but truth fixed and perpetual. Thus, for example, the Messiah has always been an object of faith. The promise respecting him, handed down by Adam, was

fresh in the times of Noah and Moses. Subsequent prophets, who foretold his coming, prophesied also of other events, the accomplishment of which, from time to time, proved at once the divinity of their mission, and the truth of the promises respecting the Messiah. They all declared, that the dispensation under which they lived, was merely preparatory to that of the Messiah; that it would be preserved till he should come, and then he would establish an everlasting kingdom: so that either their economy, or that of the Messiah, of which it was the earnest, would always subsist. And such has really been the fact. Jesus Christ made his appearance under the circumstances predicted. He himself wrought miracles, and furnished his apostles with those extraordinary powers which they employed in the conversion of the heathen world; the prophecies were accomplished, and his Messiahship was indubitably demonstrated.

VIII. I see many religions in the world, of opposite principles, and, consequently, all false excepting one. Each challenges belief on its own authority, and denounces punishment on unbelievers. Yet I cannot, for all this, believe them; for each may use the same language, each may lay claim to inspiration. But, on examining the Christian religion, I find prophecies actually accomplished, miracles without number so well attested, that no one can reasonably doubt their reality: and this is what I find in no other religion.

IX. The only religion which is contrary to our

nature in its present state, which opposes all our pleasures, and which appears, at first sight, contrary to common sense, is the only one which has always existed.

X. If religion be true, its establishment and glory must be the ultimate object of the whole course of human affairs: the internal sentiments of the human mind must be conformable to its statements respecting our nature; it must be the goal and centre to which all things tend: so that a knowledge of its principles will suffice to explain the nature of individual man, and the whole system of the world in general. It is on these grounds that infidels have taken occasion to reproach the Christian religion, (but evidently for want of knowing it better;) they have imagined that it consists simply in the adoration of God, as an infinite, almighty and eternal Being; though this is pure deism, and differs from Christianity almost as much as atheism, which is diametrically opposed to it. Hence they infer that our religion is not true; for if it were so, they argue, God would manifest himself to men by proofs so palpable, as to render unbelief impossible. But let them draw what conclusions they please against deism, their reasoning is totally inapplicable to the Christian system, which declares, that since the introduction of sin, God has not manifested himself to mankind with the highest possible evidence, and the essence of which consists in the mystery of a Redeemer, who, uniting in himself the divine and human natures, rescues man from the bondage of cor-

ruption, and, in his divine person, reconciles them to God.

Christianity instructs mankind in these two truths: That there is a God whom it is possible for them to resemble and enjoy, and that the corruption of their nature renders them unworthy of him. It is equally important for men to know each of these truths; since it is equally dangerous for man to know God, without knowing his fallen state, or to know his fallen state, without knowing that Redeemer who can deliver him from it. The knowledge of these truths apart, produces either the pride of philosophers who know God, but not their fallen state; or the despair of atheists who know their fallen state, without knowing a Redeemer. But though the necessities of man require that he should know both these points, it depends entirely on the mercy of God that he should inform us respecting them. This is what Christianity actually performs: this, as we just now said, constitutes its essence. Let any man examine the real state of things in the world, and see if every thing does not tend to confirm the truth of these prime articles of our religion.

XI. If a man is not sensible that he is full of pride, ambition, irregular desires, weakness, misery, and unrighteousness, he is totally blind. But if he knows that such is his real state, and yet has no desire to be delivered from it, in what terms can we speak of so unreasonable a being? What emotion but that of reverence can we feel for a religion, that is so well acquainted with the disorders of our na-

ture? And how can we help devoutly wishing the truth of a religion that proffers remedies so complete?

XII. It is impossible to review the whole assemblage of the proofs of the Christian religion, without feeling their force to a degree that no reasonable man can resist.

Consider its establishment. Here is a religion contrary to our nature, which establishes itself in men's minds with so much mildness as to use no external force, and yet, with so much energy, that no tortures could silence its martyrs and confessors; and all this was accomplished, not only without the assistance of a single prince, but in defiance of earthly potentates who all sought to crush it.

Consider the holiness, the elevation, and the humility of a real Christian. The pagan philosophers sometimes raised themselves above the rest of mankind, by a more regular manner of living, and by sentiments in some measure conformable to Christianity. But they never esteemed as a virtue what Christians term humility: indeed it would have been incompatible with other dispositions which they considered as virtuous. The Christian religion is the only one which has known how to combine sentiments that were apparently incongruous, and has taught mankind, that so far from humility being inconsistent with the practice of other virtues, all other virtues, if this be wanting, are only blemishes and vices.

Consider the numberless extraordinary facts re-

corded in holy writ, the superhuman grandeur and sublimity of its contents, the admirable simplicity of the style—without affectation, without any laboured embellishments, and bearing the most unequivocal impress of truth.

Consider particularly the character of Jesus Christ. Whatever may be our sentiments in other respects, it is impossible not to acknowledge the astonishing greatness and elevation of his soul: of this, his very childhood gave indications, when he conversed with the doctors in the temple: yet, instead of cultivating his talents by study and the society of men of learning, he passed thirty years of his life in retirement from the world, engaged in a mechanical employment; and, during the three years of his ministry, chose for his associates, and delegated as his apostles, men without science, learning, or reputation, and exposed himself to the enmity of men who were deemed the wisest and most learned of their time. Strange conduct this, in a man who projected the establishment of a new religion!

Consider attentively the apostles of Jesus Christ; uneducated, unlettered men, yet who, all at once, found themselves possessed of wisdom sufficient to confound the ablest philosophers, and endued with courage to resist all the kings and tyrants who opposed the establishment of the religion they promulged.

Consider the astonishing succession of prophets during a period of two thousand years, who all predicted, in various ways, the minutest circumstances of the life, death, and resurrection of Je-

sus Christ, the mission of the apostles, the spread of the Gospel, the conversion of the Gentiles, and many other particulars relating to the establishment of Christianity, and the abolition of the Jewish economy.

Consider the wonderful accomplishment of the prophecies in Jesus Christ, to whom they apply with such exactness, that nothing but wilful blindness can prevent the perception that he is the person they were designed to predict.

Consider the state of the Jewish people, both before and after the coming of Jesus Christ; their flourishing state before the coming of the Saviour, and their miserable condition since their rejection of him: for, to this day, they are without any symbol of their religion, without a temple, without sacrifices, scattered over all lands, a reproach, and a by-word among all nations.

Consider the perpetuity of the Christian religion, which has subsisted from the beginning of the world, either among the saints of the Old Testament, who lived in expectation of the coming of Christ, or among those who have received him and believed on him in after times: no other religion has possessed that perpetuity, which is so distinguishing a mark of truth.

Lastly, consider the holiness of this religion, the light its doctrines shed upon the contrarieties of our nature, and those illustrious and supernatural marks of its divinity, which strike us wherever we turn our eyes.

After considering all these things, let any man

judge if it be possible to doubt whether the Christian Religion is the only true one, or if there be any other which can at all enter into competition with its claims.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION PROVED BY THE CONTRARIETIES IN MAN, AND BY ORIGINAL SIN.

THE traces of original greatness, and the symptoms of present debasement in our nature, are so apparent, that it is impossible for them to be passed over in the true system of religion, since such a system must be perfectly acquainted with the nature of the beings for whom it is intended: it must know all that is great, and all that is debased in that nature, and the cause of both: we therefore expect it to assert, that there is in man a powerful principle of greatness, and an equally powerful principle of debasement. It must also account for these astonishing contrarieties in our nature. And if there is a Being who is the originator and the final end of all things, the true religion must enforce the obligation of loving and adoring him alone.

Yet, as we find ourselves incapable of adoring a being we do not know, and of loving any but ourselves, it must, while it enforces our obligations, also declare our incapacity to fulfil them, and acquaint us with its proper remedies.

In order to make us happy, the true religion must show us, that there is a God whom it is our duty to love: that our true felicity consists in union with him, and all our misery in being separated from

him; it must apprize us, that we are enveloped in a darkness which prevents us from knowing and loving him, and that since our inclination leads us away from God, while our duty is plainly to love him supremely, we are full of unrighteousness. It must explain the reason of our aversion to God, and to our own real good; and must bring within our reach the remedies for this malady. Let us examine, with this view, all the religions in the world, and see if any, excepting Christianity, will satisfy our demands.

Will the lessons of the philosophers satisfy us, who offer, as the chief good, a good within ourselves? Can this be the true good? Is it here they have found a remedy for our disorders? Will it quell man's presumption, to put him on an equality with Deity? or will it cure his irregular propensities to place his chief good in sensual pleasure, and thus to reduce him to a level with the brutes? "Raise thy eyes to the Deity," said some, "behold in him the Being thou art to resemble, and who formed thee to adore him! It depends on thyself to attain his image: Philosophy will lead thee to that elevation, if thou wilt follow her guidance." Others said, "Turn thy eyes downwards, base worm, to the brutes, and see for what creatures thou art the fit companion!"

What then will become of man? Is he to be on a level with the Deity, or with brutes? Between these extremes how frightful a distance! Where and what are we? Is there no religion that shall cure at once our pride and our sensuality? Is

there none that shall teach us our true good and our obligations, and furnish us with a remedy for the frailty that violates them? Let us listen to the wisdom of God addressing us in the Christian revelation.—"In vain, O men! you seek in yourselves for the remedy of your miseries. All that the light of reason can disclose will only convince you, that, in yourselves, you can find neither truth nor happiness: philosophers have promised you satisfaction, but they have never given it. They know not what constitutes your real good, nor what is your real state. How, indeed, could they apply the remedy, when they were ignorant of the disease? Your chief maladies are pride, which draws you off from God, and the love of sensible objects, which chains you to the earth; and philosophers, in attempting to check the one, have only aggravated the other. Have they taught you to aspire after the Deity, and to consider your nature as allied to his? In so doing they have only excited your pride. Those who have seen the vanity of such attempts, have led you into an error equally fatal, by telling you that your nature resembled that of brutes, and prompting you to seek for happiness in the indulgence of those sensual propensities which are common to both. Be assured, it is not by such means that you will correct the perversities of your nature. Look not to men either for truth or consolation.—I am that being who formed you, and I alone can teach you what you are. You are not now in the state in which I formed you. I created man holy, innocent, and perfect: I filled his soul

with light and intelligence: I manifested my glory to him: I displayed the wonders of my power. The eye of man then gazed upon the majesty of God. No darkness blinded him; neither pain nor mortality oppressed him. But this glorious state was too much for him; it excited his presumption. He wished to make himself his own centre, to be independent of my aid. He withdrew from my control, and as he strove to resemble me by seeking for happiness in himself, I allowed him to make the trial. I caused the inferior creatures once under his subjection, to revolt, and made them his enemies. And now man is become like the beasts; and so far has he wandered, that scarcely a ray of light reaches him to remind him of the Author of his being: all his conceptions of me have been lost or confounded. The senses, rendered independent of reason, and often its masters, impel him to unlawful gratifications. All creatures are his open foes, or his seducers, and he is their slave, subdued by force, or allured by pleasure, that most terrible and imperious of all dominations."

Such is the actual state of man. A powerful instinctive feeling of the happiness of his primitive nature remains, but he is plunged into a miserable state of blindness and sensuality, which is become a second nature.

II. From the principles I have laid down, you may discover the cause of the contrarieties which have excited the astonishment of mankind, and divided them into so many sects. Observe all those

inward promptings after glory, those indistinct conceptions of greatness, which the deepest sense of misery cannot quench or obliterate, and ask yourself whether they are not the indications of a nobler nature?

III. Acknowledge then, proud being, what a paradox thou art to thyself. Let thy powerless reason be humbled, let thy feeble nature be silent. Learn that man infinitely surpasses the comprehension of man, and be taught by thy Maker, what thou knowest not—thy true condition.

If man had never become corrupt, he would have enjoyed truth and happiness with certainty; and if man had always been corrupt, he would have had no idea of truth or of happiness. But unhappy mortals as we are, (and the more so because there are some remains of greatness in our condition,) we have the idea of an happiness which we can never reach; there glimmers before us the image of truth, but we grasp falsehood only; we are incapable alike of absolute ignorance and of complete certainty: these are sufficient indications that we were once in a state of perfection, from which we are unhappily fallen.

What can this incessant craving, and this impotence of attainment mean, unless that there was once a happiness belonging to man, of which only the faint traces remain, in that void which he attempts to fill with every thing within his reach? But it is in vain he seeks from absent objects the relief which things present cannot give, and which neither of them can give; because, in a soul that will live for ever,

there is an infinite void that nothing can fill, but an infinite unchangeable being.

IV. It is very astonishing, that the mystery most remote from our knowledge, that, I mean, of the transmission of original sin, should be a thing without which we can possess no real knowledge of ourselves. Certainly nothing confounds our reason more than to say, that the sin of the first man has rendered those persons guilty who are so far removed as to seem incapable of sharing it. This transmission seems to us not only impossible, but most unjust; for can any thing be more contrary to the rules of our pitiful justice, than to pass eternal condemnation on an infant incapable of volition, for a sin committed 6000 years before it was born? Certainly nothing shocks us more than this doctrine, and yet without this most incomprehensible of all mysteries, we are an unintelligible enigma to ourselves. This is the master-key to the intricacies and perplexities of human existence. So that, however inconceivable this mystery may be, man, without it, is still more inconceivable.

Original sin is foolishness in the sight of men: this we allow, but let not the defect of reasonableness, in this doctrine, be objected to it, since it is not pretended that reason can *explain* it. But this foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of men. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men." 1 Cor. i. 25. Without this, what can be said of man? His whole condition depends on this point, which our feeble vision can scarcely descry. But how

could it be perceived by reason, since it is a thing above reason? And reason, far from discovering, revolts from it, when it is declared.

V. When these two states of innocence and corruption have been explained, we instantly perceive their reality. Indeed, to obtain the most convincing proofs of their existence, we need only watch the movements of our own minds; for we shall detect so many contradictions, as to make us feel it to be impossible that they could ever be found in an uncompounded subject.

This twofold tendency in man is so glaring, that some have thought that we have two souls; for one only has seemed utterly incapable of such great and sudden changes, of falling from unbounded presumption, into the most grovelling debasement.

Thus all those contrarieties which appear to place men at the greatest distance from all religion, may be the means of leading them to the knowledge of the truth.

For myself, I am free to declare, that as soon as I discovered in the Christian religion the doctrine that man is fallen and separated from God, I saw on every side indications of its truth; for nature everywhere, both in man and out of man, gives signs of a Deity departed.

Without divine revelation, what could men do but either flatter themselves, by indulging the instinctive feeling that remained of their former greatness, or lie prostrate under a sense of their present weakness? For want of seeing the whole truth, they could never attain to perfect virtue.

Some, looking upon our nature as slightly injured, and others deeming it irretrievably ruined, the former have become the victims of pride, and the latter of sloth, the two sources of all vice. Men were forced either to submit to their degradation, or to escape from it by pride. Those who perceived the excellence of human nature, knew not its corruption; so that, though they rose above despondency, they were ruined by presumption. Others who acknowledged the weakness of nature, were ignorant of its dignity, and therefore suppressed the feeling of ambition only by plunging into despair.

Hence arose the various sects of the Stoics and Epicureans, the Dogmatists and the Academy. The Christian religion alone has cured man of these two vices: not by employing one to expel the other, according to the maxims of earthly wisdom, but expelling both by the simplicity of the Gospel; for it warns the pious, when it raises them to be partakers of a divine nature, that in that state of elevation, they still carry in their bosoms a principle of corruption, which renders them, during life, liable to error, misery, sin, and death; and it proclaims to the most impious, that it is possible for them to partake of the grace of the Redeemer. Thus cherishing fear in those whom it justifies, and offering consolation to those whom it condemns, it so mingles hope and fear by means of that capability, common to all men, of grace and condemnation, that it humbles infinitely more than reason, but without producing despair; and elevates infinitely more than the pride of nature, but without inspiring presumption; and having evinced

itself alone to be free from error and vice, establishes its sole right to instruct and regenerate mankind.

VI. We cannot form a conception either of the glorious state of Adam before his fall, or of the nature of his sin, or of the transmission of it to his posterity. These events took place in a state altogether different from our own, and surpass our present capacity; nor would a perfect acquaintance with them be of any service in freeing us from our miseries. All it concerns us to know, is this, that through Adam, we are miserable, corrupt, and separated from God, but that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ; and of these facts the world furnishes the most striking proofs.

VII. How strange! that Christianity should enjoin man to acknowledge himself worthless, and even abominable, and at the same time, to aim at resembling his Maker. Without the counterpoise which each of these injunctions forms to the other, his elevation would render him superlatively proud, or his abasement would render him dreadfully abject. Misery tends to despair: greatness inspires presumption.

VIII. The incarnation shows man the greatness of his misery by the greatness of the remedy.

IX. In the Christian religion, we find attributed to man, neither a debasement which renders him incapable of excellence, nor a holiness exempt from

imperfection. No doctrine can be more suitable for man, than that which informs him of his twofold capability of receiving and losing grace, on account of the two extremes into which he is always in danger of falling—despair and pride.

X. Philosophers never inculcated sentiments adapted to both these states. They attempted to inspire sentiments purely of an elevated order, but these were not suited to our condition. Or they endeavoured to instil base and grovelling notions, and these were as little adapted to human nature as the former. There must be indeed emotions tending to humble, but consisting in sorrow for the actual state of our nature, not in unworthy notions of its capability. There must also be elevated emotions, but of an elevation attained by grace, and not by merit, and not indulged till emotions of the other kind have been felt.

XI. No one is so happy as the true Christian: no one so rational, so virtuous, so lovely. With how little pride may a Christian believe himself united to God! with how little abasement may he put himself on a level with the very worms!

Who can refuse to believe and reverence these celestial communications? Is it not clear as noonday that we perceive in ourselves indestructible marks of excellence? And is it not equally true, that the experience of every hour tells us, how deplorable is our present condition? And does not this chaos and unnatural confusion proclaim to us, with a voice

too powerful to be resisted, the reality of the two-fold state of man?

XII. That which prevents men from believing that they are capable of being united to God, is nothing but a sense of their degradation. But if they are really sincere, let them meditate on it as much as I have done, and they will perceive, that this degradation is so entire, that we cannot of ourselves determine whether the divine mercy will restore us or not. For I would ask, whence does a creature who acknowledges himself to be so vile, acquire the right to measure the mercy of God, and to limit it according to his fancy? Man, so far from knowing what God is, does not even understand his own nature, and yet, perplexed with his own condition, he ventures to affirm that God cannot restore him to communion with himself! But let me ask, whether God demands any thing excepting to love and know him? and since man is naturally capable of love and knowledge, why should he not believe that God can make himself known and beloved? For man has no doubt of his own existence, and that he loves some objects. If, then, even in the darkness that surrounds him, he can discern various objects, and find some to excite his love, why, if God imparts some rays of his glory, should he not be capable of knowing and loving him, according as he shall be pleased to reveal himself? The reasonings, therefore, that go to deny the possibility of this, must be excessively presumptuous, although founded on an apparent humility: but our humility is neither sincere nor ra-

tional, if it does not induce us to confess, that unable of ourselves to know our nature, or our destiny, God alone can inform us.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUBMISSION AND THE USE OF REASON.

I. THE highest attainment of reason is to know that there are an infinite number of things beyond its reach. And it must be extremely feeble, if it does not go so far. A man ought to know, when to doubt, when to be certain, and when to submit. He who cannot do this does not understand the real strength of reason. Men violate these three principles either by being certain of every thing as demonstrative, for want of being acquainted with the nature of demonstration, or by doubting of every thing for want of knowing when to submit; or by submitting in every thing, for want of knowing when they ought to judge.

II. If we submit every thing to reason, our religion will have nothing mysterious or supernatural. If we violate the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

Reason, Saint Augustine remarks, would never submit to revelation, if it were not convinced that submission, on some occasions, is its duty. It is proper, therefore, that it should submit, when according to its own decision, it ought to submit; and that it should not submit, when it decides on proper grounds, that it ought not to submit; but it must take great care not to deceive itself.

III. Piety is quite distinct from superstition: as soon as piety passes into superstition it is destroyed. Heretics reproach us with this superstitious submission. And we deserve the reproach, if we require submission in things which are not fit subjects for submission.

Nothing is so consonant with reason, as a disavowal of its authority in things which belong to faith. And, on the other hand, nothing is so opposed to reason, as to reject an appeal to it, on things which are not the object of faith. A total rejection of reason, or an exclusive deference to it, are two extremes equally dangerous.

IV. Faith says many things on which the senses are silent; but nothing which they deny. It is superior to them, but never contrary.

V. If I saw a miracle, say some persons, I should be converted. They would not talk in this manner, did they know what it is to be converted. They imagine that for this purpose it is only necessary to acknowledge that there is a God, and to offer addresses to him, not very different from what the pagans make to their idols. But true conversion consists in annihilating one's-self before that Eternal Sovereign whom we have so often provoked, and who might justly destroy us at any time; in acknowledging that we can do nothing without him, and deserve nothing from him, but his displeasure; and finally, in being convinced, that there is an inveterate opposition between God and ourselves, and that

without a Mediator, communion with him is impossible.

VI. Do not be surprised at seeing plain unlettered men believe without reasoning. God inspires them with a love of holiness, and a hatred of themselves. He inclines their hearts to believe. And unless God incline the heart, no man will ever believe with real and efficient faith; but, when inclined by him, no man will disbelieve. David well knew this when he said, "Incline my heart, O Lord, to thy testimonies." Psalm cxix. 36.

VII. The faith of those who believe without having examined the evidences of religion, is owing to a holy disposition of their hearts, to which what they hear of our religion is conformable. They perceive that they are the creatures of God; they wish to love none but him, and to hate none but themselves. But they feel that they want power; that they cannot draw near to God, and that unless he draws nigh to them, they can hold no communion with him. They hear it asserted in our religion, that we should love God alone, and hate none but ourselves, and that because we are wholly depraved and separated from God, God has become man to unite himself to us. There needs nothing more to induce men to believe, with such a disposition of heart, and with such a knowledge of their duty and their inability.

VIII. Those who are Christians, without the knowledge of the prophecies and other evidences of

religion, can judge of its truth as correctly as those who possess that knowledge, but by a different medium. They judge by the heart, as others judge by the understanding. It is God himself who inclines them to believe, and therefore they are most efficaciously persuaded.

I readily allow that one of these Christians who believe without logical proof, might be unable to convince a clever infidel. But those who are acquainted with the evidences of religion will prove, without difficulty, that the faith of such a man is really inspired by God, though he himself could not prove it to be so.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REFLECTIONS OF A MAN WHO IS WEARY OF SEARCHING AFTER GOD BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE, AND IS BEGINNING TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

I. When I observe the blindness and the misery of man, and the astonishing contrarieties his nature exhibits; when, amidst the unbroken silence of her universe, I behold him groping in darkness, abandoned to himself, a wanderer in this by-place of creation, without knowing who placed him here, what is his proper business, or what will become of him at death, I am filled with consternation; I feel like a person conveyed while asleep, to a desert island, who, on awaking, knows not where he is, or by what means he may make his escape. And what increases my amazement is, that it is possible to exist in this dreadful situation without despair. I see other beings about me of the same nature as myself; I ask them whether they are better informed than I am: they tell me they are not; and upon this, instead of feeling alarm, the wretched wanderers gaze carelessly round, and suffer themselves to be captivated by the first alluring object that strikes their senses. But for myself, I cannot rest in such a state, nor be content in the society of persons, who resemble me in their nature, their weakness, and their misery. They can be of no service to me at

death; I must die alone: surely then I ought to act now, as if I were alone. But if I were alone, I should not build houses, nor perplex myself with business, nor be anxious about my reputation; to discover the truth respecting my condition, would be my only concern. As I have a strong presumption that there is something existing besides the visible universe; I begin to examine whether that God, of whom all men speak, has left any marks of himself. I look round on all sides, and meet with nothing but what excites doubt and restlessness. If I saw no traces of a Deity, I should make up my mind, and conclude that there is no God. On the other hand, if I saw every where the proofs of a Creator, my mind would repose in the belief of his existence. But seeing too much to allow me to deny the fact, and too little to make me certain of it, I am in the utmost perplexity, and have wished an hundred times, that if there is a God, nature would manifest him without ambiguity, and that if there is not, every imaginary sign of his existence might vanish: in short, let nature speak distinctly, or be totally silent, and I shall know what course to take. In the present case, ignorant alike of what I am, and what I ought to do, I know neither my condition, nor my duty, yet my heart is wholly set on discovering the true good, and would deem no sacrifice too great to obtain it.

I see a multitude of religions, existing in various parts of the world, and through all ages. But none of them have either moral principles that I can approve, or evidences, that can challenge my belief. I

reject equally the religion of Mahomet, of the Chinese, of the Romans, and of the Egyptians, for this simple reason, that since one has no greater marks of truth than another, my reason cannot be disposed to receive any one in preference to the rest.

But while reviewing this unsettled and strange variety of manners and belief, I find in one small country, a peculiar people, separated from all other nations, and whose records are many ages earlier than the most ancient histories. I find that this people, who (in proportion to their extent of territory) are very powerful and numerous, adore one God, and are governed by a law which they aver was received from his hands. They maintain, that they are the only people in the world to whom God has revealed his mysteries, and that all men are corrupt, and have lost his favour; that all are abandoned to their appetites and waywardness; and that hence arise the strange mistakes, and continual changes in customs and systems of religion, while their own remain unaltered and inviolate. They declare, further, that God has determined not to leave the rest of the world in darkness for ever; that he will come as a universal deliverer; that they have been chosen to announce his coming, that they are expressly constituted heralds of this great event, to invite all mankind to join with them in expecting this Deliverer.

This people present an astonishing spectacle, and seem worthy of the greatest attention on account of many extraordinary peculiarities in their national character.

They are a people composed entirely of brothers;

instead of being formed like all other nations, of an assemblage of numberless distinct families, this, though very numerous, consists of the posterity of one man: the individuals composing it being members one of another, form one powerful body out of a single family; a circumstance totally unparalleled.

They are a people of the greatest antiquity; which seems to entitle them to peculiar veneration, and is of special importance in relation to our present inquiry; for if God has from the beginning of time, made communications to mankind, it is among such a people we shall find the records of his will.

This people is not only noted for its antiquity, but is still more remarkable, for having continued without interruption, from their origin to the present time. The nations of Greece and Italy, the Lacedemonians, the Athenians, the Romans, and others of later date, have long ago perished, but the people I am speaking of, have always subsisted, and, notwithstanding the invasions of many powerful kings who (as the most authentic historians testify, and as might be expected from the usual course of things,) have attempted their destruction, they have been constantly preserved, as well as their national records, which, extending from the very origin of the human race, to our own times, include in their duration all other histories.

The law by which this people is governed, is by far the most ancient in the world, and the only one, which, like the nation itself, has continued to exist without interruption. Philo the Jew, has noticed this fact, in several passages of his writings, and Josephus

has stated it with great force in his book against Appion, where he shows, that the very name of law was not known among other nations, till a thousand years after the Jewish code had been promulged; so that Homer, who mentions so many nations, never once makes use of it. We may judge of the perfection of this law, by simply reading it: we shall find that all its provisions are made with so much wisdom, equity, and judgment, that the most ancient legislators of Greece and Rome, who had any knowledge of it, have grafted their principal laws on it; as may be seen in the Twelve Tables, and as Josephus shows by other instances.

Yet this law, is distinguished above all others for its rigour and severity, binding the people, in order to retain them in their allegiance, to a thousand minute and laborious observances under pain of death. So that its preservation, for ages, among a people prone to rebellion and impatient of control, is most marvellous; especially, when we find, that all other states have from time to time altered their institutions, though far easier to be observed.

II. This people are also remarkable for their sincerity. They guard with the utmost devotion and fidelity, the very book in which Moses declares that they have always been ungrateful to God, and that he knows that they will be so to a greater degree after his death; but that he calls heaven and earth to witness that he has forewarned them; that at last God will be provoked against them, and scatter them through all nations, and that, as they provoked him

by worshipping gods which were not their Gods, he will provoke them, by calling a people which were not his people. Nevertheless, that very book which reproaches them in so many forms, they preserve at the hazard of their lives. Such sincerity is without example in the history of the world, and cannot be traced to any natural principle.

Lastly, I find no reason to doubt the authenticity of the book which narrates all these things; for there is a very great difference between a book composed by an individual, and getting into circulation among a people, and a book composed by the people themselves. In the latter case, the antiquity of the book and of the people is the same.

Here is a book made by authors who lived at the time when the events took place which they record. Every history which is not thus contemporaneous, is of doubtful authority: such were those of the Sybils and Trismegistus, and many others which have obtained currency for a time, but have afterwards been exploded. But this cannot be the case when writers are contemporaneous with the events.

III. What a difference between one book and another! I am not surprised that the Greeks produced the Iliad, nor that the Chinese and Egyptians compiled their national histories. One can easily see how all this was accomplished. These fabulous historians were not contemporaneous with the events. Homer composed a romance which he gave as such: for no one can believe that Troy and Agamemnon ever existed any more than the golden

apples in the gardens of the Hesperides. Homer never intended to write a history, but simply to compose an interesting poem. His book was almost the only one of that age; its beauty ensured it duration; every body knew and talked of it, and in short could say it by heart. After four centuries, the witnesses of events are dead, no one can tell on his own knowledge whether a narrative be true or fabulous: the reports of one's ancestors are the only authority, and these suffice sometimes to make a story pass for true.

CHAPTER XII.

THE JEWS, CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY.

I. After the deluge and the creation, as it was not the intention of the Almighty to manifest himself again by such extraordinary events as the destruction of a world, or the creation of a new one, he originated a chosen nation, with a design to continue it till the times of the Messiah, who would form a people by his Spirit.

II. God, intending to show that he could form a holy people of invisible sanctity, and conduct them to eternal glory, bestowed temporal blessings, as he intended to dispense spiritual blessings, that men might judge, by what he performed with visible objects, of his power over invisible things. He saved his chosen people from the deluge, in the person of Noah; he caused them to spring from Abraham, he redeemed them from their enemies, and gave them rest in the promised land. The design of God was not simply to save from the deluge, and to raise from the stock of Abraham a whole people, in order to bring them into a fruitful land; but as nature is an image of grace, so these visible miracles were images of those invisible ones which he intended to perform.

III. Another reason why God formed the Jewish people was to show, that as he designed his spiritual people should want carnal and perishable blessings, these things would not be withheld through defect of power to bestow them.

The Jewish nation were engrossed with earthly expectations; they believed that God bore an exclusive regard to their progenitor Abraham, and to all his posterity; that for this alone he had multiplied them, and kept them from intermixing with other nations; had brought them out of Egypt with signs and wonders; had fed them with manna in the wilderness; had placed them in a rich and fertile country; had given them kings, and a magnificent temple, where sacrifices were offered to purify them by the shedding of blood; and finally, that, for this reason, he would send the Messiah, to make them masters of the world.

The Jews were accustomed to great and splendid miracles; and looking upon the wonders wrought at the Red Sea, and on their entrance into Canaan, as an epitome of what would be achieved by the Messiah, they expected events still more extraordinary to attend his coming, compared with which, all that Moses wrought would be a mere scantling.

When these carnal prejudices were inveterate among them, Jesus Christ appeared at the predicted time, but not with the grandeur they anticipated, and therefore was not recognized as the Messiah. After his death, St. Paul was raised up to teach his countrymen, that all the events of their history were but figures; that the kingdom of God was not in

flesh, but in spirit; that their enemies were not the Babylonians, but their corrupt propensities; that God was not pleased with temples made by hands, but with the pure and humble heart; that not outward circumcision, but the circumcision of the heart only was of any avail.

IV. As it seemed fit to the Almighty, not to discover these events to a people who were unworthy of knowing them, and yet to predict them, that they might be the objects of faith, he caused his prophets to announce the time clearly, and sometimes the events, though most generally in figures: so that those who loved the sensual objects which formed the types, might rest in them; and those who loved the things prefigured, might discern them. The consequence was, that when the Messiah came, the nation were divided into two classes—the spiritual who received him, and the carnal who rejected him, but who still continue to be his witnesses.

V. The carnal Jews understood neither the grandeur, nor the humiliation, of the Messiah predicted by their prophets. They understood not his grandeur: as when it is said, that the Messiah was the Lord of David, although his Son; that he was before Abraham, and yet that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. They did not believe that his nature was so exalted as to exist from all eternity; and they as little comprehended what was declared respecting his humiliation and death. The Messiah, said they, abideth for ever; but this man asserts of himself

that he shall die. They believed in him neither as appointed to suffer death, nor as eternal: they only looked for the signs of earthly grandeur.

They were so in love with the figure, and fixed their attention so exclusively upon it, that they knew not the real personage, when he came, at the time, and in the manner, predicted.

VI. Persons who are disposed to infidelity, assume as a pretext the unbelief of the Jews. If the Messiahship of Jesus Christ was so evident, say they, why was it not admitted? But the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews, is one of the grounds of our belief. Our own faith would be shaken, if they had adopted it; we should then have a more plausible reason for unbelief and scepticism. Is it not most striking, to observe the Jews admirers of the prophecies, but rejecters of their fulfilment, and that even this rejection should have been predicted?

VII. That the Messiah might be properly attested, it was requisite that there should be antecedent prophecies, kept by persons not liable to suspicion, of extraordinary diligence, fidelity, zeal, and general notoriety. For this purpose, the Almighty chose a carnal people, to whom he entrusted the prophecies which foretold the Messiah as a deliverer and dispenser of those carnal blessings which they loved: this excited an ardent attachment to the writings of their prophets, which they held up to the view of the whole world, and assured all nations, that the predicted Messiah would come in the manner these

writings specified. But deceived by the appearance of the Messiah in abasement and poverty, they became his most virulent enemies. Thus that very people, who of all others can be least suspected of favouring us, have rendered the greatest service to our cause, and by their zeal for the law and the prophets, bear and preserve with incorruptible fidelity, their own condemnation, and the evidences of our religion.

VIII. Those who rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, and to whom he was an offence, are the very persons who preserve the books that declare he would be rejected and become an offence. Thus by rejecting him, they have established his claims: and he is proved to be the Messiah equally by the pious Jews who received him, and by the impious who rejected him; for both these events were foretold. It was for this purpose, that a double sense was attached to the prophecies, the one spiritual, to which the Jews were averse, the other carnal, which they loved. If the spiritual sense had been apparent, they could not have loved it, and their repugnance to it would have quenched their attachment to these sacred books, and the ceremonies they so scrupulously observed. And if they had really loved these spiritual promises, even supposing they had preserved them uncorrupted, till the times of the Messiah, their testimony would have lost its force, since it would have been that of friends.

This shows the propriety of obscuring the spiritual sense. Yet, if this sense had been com-

pletely concealed, it would have furnished no testimony to the Messiah. How then does the matter stand? In the greater number of passages, the spiritual sense is obscurely conveyed under the literal, while in a few others, it is clearly expressed; the period of the Messiah's appearance especially, and the state of the world at that time, are foretold in the most precise terms. Indeed, so clearly is the spiritual sense expressed in some passages, that it would indicate a mind lost in sensuality not to discern it.

Such then has been the conduct of divine Providence. The spiritual sense is veiled by the literal, in the great majority of passages, and unfolded in others; rarely, it is true, but yet it has been so ordered, that the passages in which the spiritual sense is obscured, are equivocal and admit of both senses, while the passages which speak of spiritual things only, are so constructed as to admit of no other application.

Thus the possibility of error is avoided, and none but persons as carnal as the unbelieving Jews themselves, can misinterpret these prophecies.

When extraordinary blessings are promised, what should prevent men from understanding spiritual good to be intended, unless that love of sensible objects, which confines their views to the things of the world? But those who place their happiness in God, readily refer every thing to him. There are in fact two principles, one or other of which predominate in the human mind—the love of the world and the love of God. I do not mean that all at-

tachment to visible objects is incompatible with faith, or that the love of God excludes all affection for visible objects. But where the former is the governing principle, though these blessings may be acknowledged to come from God, yet the world has possession of the heart: on the contrary, where the latter is supreme, the goods of this life may be used, but God will be the centre of happiness.

We denominate objects from their relation to our main pursuit. Every thing which hinders us in that, is termed an enemy. Thus creatures, though good in themselves, are the enemies of the righteous, when they draw them off from God; and God is the enemy of worldly men, when he destroys their schemes of aggrandizement.

As the term *enemy* depends for its application on our main pursuit, the righteous Jews understood by it their corrupt propensities, and the carnal applied it to the Babylonians: it was therefore obscure only to the unrighteous. To this Isaiah referred when he said, "Seal the law for my disciples," Isa. viii. 16. and that Jesus Christ "would be a rock of offence," viii. 14. "But happy are those who are not offended in him," Matt. ii. 16. To the same purport says Hosea, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein," Hosea xiv. 9.

Such was the peculiar nature of the old dispensation, that, while it enlightened some, it blinded others, but by their blindness confirmed the truth to

the former; for so extraordinary and divine were the temporal blessings they received from God, that they evinced the divine power to bestow spiritual blessings and a Messiah.

IX. The time of the first coming of Jesus Christ is foretold; the time of his second coming is not foretold, because the first was to be concealed: but the second will be so illustrious, that even his enemies must recognize it. At his first coming, he was to be known only by those who searched the Scriptures diligently; and for such persons, God so ordered things, that every thing served to point him out. The Jews who received him proved his claims, because they were the depositary of the prophecies; and those who rejected him proved his claims, because, by so doing, they accomplished the prophecies.

X. The Jews had miracles and prophecies which they saw accomplished; and the doctrine of their law was to adore and love one God. It was also perpetual. Thus it had all the marks of the true religion, and was proved to be that religion. But we must distinguish the doctrine of the Jews from the doctrine of the laws of the Jews. For the doctrine of the Jews, although it had miracles, prophecies, and perpetuity, was not true, because it wanted the adoration and love of God alone.

The Jewish Religion must be considered very differently, as it was held by the sincerely pious and by the mass of the people: the sentiments of the peo-

ple respecting morals and happiness were ridiculous, those of the truly pious were incomparable. The foundation of their religion is admirable. It is the most ancient book in the world, and the most authentic. Mahomet, to preserve his writings, has forbidden his followers to read them; Moses, for the same reason, has laid his open to all mankind.

XI. The Jewish Religion is divine in its authority, its duration, its perpetuity, its morality, its administration, its scheme of doctrine, and its effects. It was formed to shadow forth the truth respecting the Messiah, of which it is at once the symbol and the evidence.

Among the Jews, truth existed only in figure. In heaven it is unveiled. In the church it is veiled and recognized by its correspondence to the figure. The figure is spread over the truth, and the truth is seen through the figure.

XII. Whoever forms an opinion of the Jewish Religion by its exterior, will grossly misconceive it. From its sacred books, and the declarations of its prophets, it plainly appears, that it is not to be understood according to the letter. So our Religion exists in divine purity in the Gospels, the Apostolic writings, and tradition, but is disfigured by those who have perverted it.

XIII. The Jews were of two kinds: one felt like Pagans, the other like Christians. The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, was to be a great tem-

poral prince. According to the carnal Christians, he is come, that the love of God may be dispensed with, and to give us sacraments, which may be efficacious without any thing being done on our part. Neither of these is either the Jewish Religion or the Christian. True Jews and true Christians both acknowledge a Messiah, who will make them love God, and by this love triumph over their enemies.

XIV. The veil which is spread over the Scriptures for the Jews, is also there for false Christians, and for all who do not hate themselves. But only let a man be sincerely disposed to hate himself, and how eager will he be to understand them, and to obtain the knowledge of Jesus Christ!

XV. The carnal Jews occupy the middle, between Christians and Pagans. The Pagans know not God, and love only the world; the Jews know God, and love only the world; Christians know the true God, and do not love the world. The Jews and the Pagans love the same kind of good; the Jews and the Christians know the same God.

XVI. The Jews are evidently a people formed on purpose to serve as witnesses to the Messiah. They preserve and revere their sacred books, but understand them not. And all this has been predicted; for it is said, that the judgments of God are intrusted to them, but as a sealed book.

As long as the prophets existed to maintain the law, the people neglected it. But, by a remarkable

interposition of providence, when the succession of prophets was closed, a zealous attachment to the law sprung up among the people.

XVII. When the creation of the world began to be a distant event, God provided a contemporary historian, and constituted a whole nation the guardians of his writings, that the history of this great event might be the most authentic in the world, and that all men might be informed of what it was so important for them to know, but which they could not know by any other method.

XVIII. Moses was unquestionably a man of superior abilities. If, then he had intended to deceive, he would have formed a plan by which he would have been likely to escape detection; but on the contrary, he has written in such a manner, that if he had dealt in fables, any Jew whatever might have detected the imposture.

Why, for example, did he make the lives of the antediluvians so long, and the generations so few? He might have concealed his errors, by introducing into his chronology a multitude of generations; for this it is, and not the number of years, which renders history doubtful and obscure.

Truth is altered merely by passing through a number of hands. But Moses puts two of the most memorable events that can be thought of, the Creation and the Deluge, so close together, that they seem almost to touch, owing to the small number of generations between each. For at the time when

he wrote, the memory of them must have been quite fresh in the minds of all his countrymen.

Shem, who had seen Lamech, the contemporary of Adam, saw Abraham: and Abraham was seen by Jacob, who saw those who lived in the time of Moses. The Deluge and the Creation, therefore, really happened. This will be conclusive with those who understand the nature of the argument.

The longevity of the Patriarchs, instead of occasioning the loss of the memory of past events, was the means of preserving it. For, the reason that men now a days are not well acquainted with the history of their ancestors is, that they have scarcely ever lived with any of them, and that the latter are generally dead before their descendants have attained to years of maturity. But when human life was protracted to such a length, children lived a long time with their parents, and had ample opportunities for conversing with them. And on what could they converse, excepting the story of their ancestors, since all history would be comprised in this, and the arts and sciences, which take up so much of our time, had then no existence? We may easily conceive why persons in those early ages would take particular care of their genealogies.

XIX. The more I examine the Jews, the more marks of truth I find; particularly, that they are without prophets, and without a king, and that, being our enemies, they are such admirable witnesses of the truth of the prophecies in which their blindness and its consequences are foretold. It is in

this depository I find a religion truly divine in its authority, its duration, its perpetuity, its morality, its administration, and its effects. And I stretch forth my arms to my Redeemer, who, after being predicted for four thousand years, came into the world to suffer and to die for me, at the very time, and under all the circumstances foretold: by his grace, I wait for death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to him; and meanwhile, I rejoice to live, receiving either the good things he is pleased to give me, or the trials he sends for my benefit, and which he has taught me how to endure by his own example.

Thus I refute all other religions: here I find an answer to all objections. It is just that a God so pure should discover himself only to those whose hearts are purified.

It is to me a most convincing argument, that, since the memory of man, this people has always existed. They have constantly declared, that men are in a state of universal corruption, but that a Redeemer should come: it is not one man who has said so, but an infinite number of men; in fact, a whole nation uttering prophecies for four thousand years.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TYPES; THAT THE OLD DISPENSATION WAS FIGURATIVE.

I. SOME types are clear and demonstrative, but there are others which seem less natural, and impress only those who are convinced on other grounds. Such types may appear to resemble those employed by persons who found prophecies upon the Apocalypse, which they explain just as suits their fancy. But there is this difference, that, in the latter case, there is no firm basis to rest upon. So that nothing can be more unreasonable, than to pretend that their types are as well founded as some of ours; for they have no demonstrative ones, but we have. The two cases, therefore, are not parallel. We must not, on account of a partial similarity, confound and blend things which in other points are so very different.

II. One of the principal reasons why the prophets veiled the spiritual blessings they promised, under the types of earthly blessings, was, that they had to do with a carnal people, who were to be the depository of a spiritual covenant.

Jesus Christ was typified by Joseph, the well-beloved of his father, and sent by him to see his brethren; by them, though innocent, sold for twenty pieces of silver, and by that means becoming their

lord, their saviour, and the saviour of strangers, and the saviour of the world: for these events would not have taken place had it not been for their intention of killing him, and then actually disowning and selling him.

Joseph, on a false accusation, was put in prison between two criminals; Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Joseph predicted the deliverance of the one, and the death of the other, though both were apparently in the same circumstances. Jesus Christ saved one, and left the other, though charged with the same crimes. Joseph foretold deliverance, Jesus effected salvation. Joseph requested the one whose life would be spared to remember him when restored to his office; the saved thief besought Jesus Christ to remember him when he should come into his kingdom.

III. Grace is a type of glory; for it is not the ultimate end. Grace was typified by the law, and itself typifies glory, yet in such a manner that it is, at the same time, the means of attaining it.

IV. The synagogue could not be utterly destroyed, because it was a type of the church—but, because it was only a type, it was brought into a state of subjection. The type subsisted till the antitype was established; so that the Church has been always visible, either in that figurative representation which was an earnest of it, or in reality.

V. To prove at once the truth of both Testa-

ments, it is only necessary to examine whether the prophecies of the one are accomplished in the other. To judge of the prophecies, we must understand them: for if we believe that they have only one sense, it is certain that the Messiah is not come: but if they have two senses, it is certain that he is come, in the person of Jesus Christ.

The whole question is, Whether they have two senses, whether they are figurative or literal; that is, whether we must endeavour to find something as their real object, which does not appear at first sight, or be satisfied with the first meaning they present?

If the law and the sacrifices are the substance, they must be pleasing to God, and in no sense displeasing; if they are types, they must be pleasing to God, and in a certain sense displeasing. But in the Scriptures, they are represented as being both pleasing and displeasing to God: therefore they are types.

VI. Two considerations will suffice to evince that the language of the Old Testament is figurative, and that, by temporal blessings, those of a higher order were shadowed forth. In the first place, it would be unworthy of the Divine Being to communicate in his Revelation promises of only temporal happiness, and secondly, though the prophets gave most explicit assurances of temporal prosperity, yet they asserted that their prophecies were obscure, and that they had a meaning different from what appeared at first sight, which would be understood only in latter times. They must therefore have referred to other sacrifices and to another saviour.

Let it also be observed, that their expressions would be contradictory and absurd, if they are not supposed to mean, by the terms law and sacrifices, something besides the Mosaic law and sacrifices: for this would involve gross and palpable contradictions in their writings, sometimes even in a single chapter. Hence we conclude that they must have referred to other objects.

VII. In the Jewish Scriptures, it is declared, that the law would be changed; that the people should be without a king, without princes, and without sacrifices; that there would be a new covenant; that the law should be new modelled; that the precepts they had received were not good; that their sacrifices were abominable, and that God desired them not.

On the other hand, it is said, that the law should endure for ever; that the covenant should be everlasting; that the sceptre should never depart from them, till a king should come, who would reign for ever. Do all these passages point out the reality? No. Do they all point out the figure? No. But they point out either the reality or the figure. But the first class, by excluding the reality, show that they must be taken figuratively. These declarations, taken collectively, cannot be understood literally; but as all difficulty vanishes if they are understood figuratively: we infer that they are not spoken of the reality, but of the figure.

VIII. To ascertain whether the law and the sacrifices are the reality, or the figure, we must observe

whether the prophets employ a phraseology which implies that their views were confined to the old covenant, as something ultimate and unchangeable, or whether they looked upon it as the representation of an object to which it bore the same relation as a painting to the original. Now, what is their language on these topics? When they say, that the covenant will be eternal, do they speak of that covenant which they say will be changed? and so of the sacrifices? &c.

IX. The prophets declared, in the most express terms, the never-failing love of God to Israel, and the perpetuity of the law. They also said, that the meaning of their predictions was veiled, and not understood by their countrymen.

A cipher has a two-fold sense. When an important letter is intercepted, to which a meaning may be attached, and yet we are told, that there is another meaning, so concealed that the letter may be seen without seeing that, and understood without understanding that, what can we suppose but that the cipher has a double meaning, and especially if we also find palpable contradictions in the literal sense? And how highly should we esteem that person who would decipher the letter, and explain the hidden meaning, particularly if he did it on natural and intelligible principles! But this is what Jesus Christ and his Apostles have done. They have broken the seal, they have removed the veil, and revealed the spirit of the prophecies. They have shown, that the enemies of men are their passions,

that the Redeemer must be a spiritual one, and that it was ordained he should appear twice; the first time in meanness, to abase the proud; the second time, in glory, to raise the humble; and that Jesus Christ is both God and Man.

X. Jesus Christ made it his business to teach men that they were lovers of themselves; that they were enslaved, blind, sick, unhappy, and sinful; that to him they must look for deliverance, illumination, health, and happiness; that this must be obtained by hating ourselves, and following him through the ignominy and death of the Cross.

The letter killeth; the whole was figurative; it was necessary that the Messiah should suffer. Behold the cipher he has given! A Deity in a state of humiliation; a circumcision of the heart; a real fast; a real sacrifice; a true temple; a twofold law; a twofold table of the law; a double temple and a double captivity.

He has taught us that all these things were only figures: he has shown who are the true Israelites, and what is real freedom, and true circumcision, and the true bread from heaven.

XI. In the promises of the Old Testament, every one may find that to which he is most attached; either spiritual or temporal blessings; God, or the creatures; with this difference however, that those who look there for the creatures, find them indeed, but with many contradictions, with a prohibition from loving them, and with a command to adore and

love God alone; while those who look there for God, find him without any contradiction, and with a command to love him alone.

XII. The source of the apparent contradictions in Scripture are these: a God humbled to the death of the Cross, a Messiah triumphing over death by submitting to death, the two natures in Jesus Christ, his two advents, and a twofold state of human nature. As, in describing a person's character, it is not enough to dwell merely upon its most agreeable features, but every part must be brought into one view, and harmonized; so, to understand an author completely, a consistent sense must be given to his whole work.

In the works of every author who writes intelligibly, there is a sense which harmonizes all the parts. It is not enough that the sense suits several passages, it must also reconcile those that seem contradictory. Now, let us apply this principle to the Scriptures: no man will assert that they are a tissue of nonsense; the marks of intelligence are too strong. What, then, is that mode of interpretation which will reconcile the apparent contradictions of this volume? The true sense is evidently not that of the Jews. But in the person of Jesus Christ all the discordances are harmonized.

The Jews knew not how to reconcile the termination of the kingly power, and their national independence, predicted by Hosea, with the prophecy of Jacob.

If the law, the sacrifices, and temporal dominion,

are taken for the substance, we cannot reconcile all the passages of any one writer or book in the Bible, sometimes not even of a chapter. This indicates pretty plainly the real sense of Scripture.

XIII. The Jews were not allowed to sacrifice out of Jerusalem, the place chosen by God, nor even to eat the tithes elsewhere.

Hosea predicted, that they should be without king, without prince, without sacrifices, and without idols; and we see this accomplished at the present day, since they cannot sacrifice out of Jerusalem according to the law.

XIV. When the Word of God is false, taken literally, it is true in a spiritual sense. "Sit thou on my right hand." This is false literally, but true spiritually. In expressions of this sort, God is spoken of after the manner of men; the one just mentioned, means, that God holds the Messiah in similar esteem to what men feel towards those whom they place on their right hand. It is, in fact, a token of the purpose of God, and not of his manner of accomplishing it.

Thus, when it is said, "God hath received the odour of your incense, and will recompense you with a fruitful land," it means, that as one man is pleased with receiving a present from another, and rewards him accordingly, so God would reward those who felt towards him as a man who presents an offering to a superior.

XV. The only object of the Scriptures is charity. Every thing which does not directly tend to promote this is figurative. And, since there is only this one end, every thing which does not refer to it expressly, must do so figuratively.

God has presented this one principle of charity under many various forms, in condescension to our weakness, which always craves variety, yet in a manner that always leads us to one object; for one only is absolutely needful, and we love variety: but, by a variety which leads to one object, God satisfies at once our necessities and our wishes.

XVI. The rabbies consider the breasts of the spouse as figurative, and every thing else which does not tend to what, in their view, is the great object of the Scriptures, namely, temporal blessings.

XVII. There are those who clearly perceive, that man has no enemy but that propensity to evil which draws him from God, and that his only good must be God, and not earthly good. Let those who believe that sensual enjoyment constitutes man's chief good, and that its deprivation is the greatest evil that can befall him, indulge themselves without restraint, and perish in their excesses. But for those who seek God with all their heart, who dread nothing but the hiding of his countenance, whose only desire is to gain his favour, and whose only enemies are those who hinder their obtaining it—enemies whom they deplore to be surrounded and subdued by—let such be consoled: for them there is a God and a Sa-

viour. A Messiah was promised, to deliver his people from their enemies: and a Messiah has come to deliver them, not from their temporal enemies, but from their sins.

XVIII. When David predicted that the Messiah would deliver his people from their enemies, taken literally, he might be supposed to mean the Egyptians; but in that case, it would be difficult to show how the prophecy has been accomplished. But the expression may also be interpreted to mean their iniquities; for, in fact, the Egyptians are not the enemies of the Messiah's people, but their iniquities are so. The word *enemies*, therefore, is equivocal.

But if David (as well as Isaiah and others) declared, as he actually has done, that the Messiah should deliver his people from their sins, the ambiguity is taken away, and the double sense of the term *enemies* is reduced to the simple sense of iniquities; for, supposing their sins were the object he had in view, he might well term them enemies; but if he meant enemies, he could not designate them by the term iniquities.

But Moses, David, and Isaiah, used the same terms. Who will assert, then, that their meaning was not the same, and that, since David, when he speaks of enemies, means iniquities, Moses does not also mean the same when he, too, speaks of enemies.

Daniel prayed for the deliverance of his people from captivity, but his thoughts were fixed on their sins; and to show this, he says, that the angel Gabriel came to him, to declare that his prayers were

heard, that seventy weeks only were to elapse, after which, his people would be delivered from their iniquities, an end would be made of sin, and the deliverer, the Most Holy One, would bring in, not a legal, but an everlasting righteousness.

When this explanation has once been given, it is impossible not to see its propriety. Keeping it in view, let us read the Old Testament, and inquire, Whether the sacrifices were real, and not typical; whether the obedience of Abraham was the true course of the friendship of God; whether the promised land was the true place of rest? Surely not. Then they were figurative. If we examine, in the same way, all the ceremonies and all the commandments, except those that relate to the love of God and our fellow-creatures, we shall see they are only figures.

CHAPTER XIV.

JESUS CHRIST.

I. The infinite distance between matter and spirit, is a type of the transcendently infinite distance between mere spirit and divine charity; for that is supernatural.

All the splendour of external grandeur has no lustre in the eyes of those who are devoted to intellectual pursuits. Intellectual grandeur is invisible to the lovers of wealth, to kings, to conquerors, and to all whose grandeur consists in external things. The grandeur of the wisdom that comes from above is invisible to the sensual, and to the merely intellectual; thus, there are three orders of minds.

Great geniuses have their empire, their renown, their grandeur, their victories: they have no need of sensual grandeur, which has no relation to that which they covet. They are perceived by other minds, not by the senses—but that is enough. Saints, too, have their empire, their renown, their grandeur, their victories, and have no need of either sensual or intellectual grandeur, which belong not to their order, and can neither add to, nor diminish the grandeur they desire. They are beheld by God and the angels, not by material beings, or by philosophic speculators. God is enough for them.

Archimedes is not less venerated for wanting the distinctions of birth. He gained no splendid vic-

tories, but he has bequeathed to mankind his inestimable inventions. Oh how great in the eyes of the intellectual! Jesus Christ living in poverty, and without composing any works of science, stands in his own order—that of holiness! He communicated no inventions, he exercised no temporal dominion, but he was humble, patient, holy in the sight of God, without sin, and terrible to evil spirits. But with what superlative majesty and glory did he come to those who looked upon him with the eyes of the heart, and beheld his heavenly wisdom!

It would have been useless for Archimedes to have acted the prince in his works on geometry, even had he been one. And it would have added nothing to the splendour of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his kingdom of holiness, to have appeared as a temporal monarch; but how great was the splendour of his own order!

It is absurd to take offence at the external meanness of Jesus Christ, as if this was of the same order as the grandeur which he came to exhibit. Only contemplate this grandeur in his life, in his passion, in his obscurity, in his death, in the choice of his disciples, in their flight, in his secret resurrection, and in the other events of his life, and you will see that it is of a kind not to be affected by a meanness that bears no relation to it. But there are some persons who can admire only a grandeur that strikes the senses, as if there were none of an intellectual order; and others who admire only what is intellectual, as if there were not in divine wisdom a grandeur infinitely superior.

All material things, the firmament, the stars, the earth, and its kingdoms, are nothing, compared with a spirit even of the lowest order; for a spirit knows all these and itself, while they know nothing. And all material things with all spirits, and all their productions, are nothing, compared with the slightest emotion of charity, for this belongs to an order infinitely more elevated.

All material things cannot produce the least thought, for they belong to two distinct orders of being. And all material things, and all spirits, cannot produce an emotion of real charity, for it belongs to an order wholly supernatural.

II. Jesus Christ lived in such obscurity (according to what the world deems obscurity) that the historians, who narrate only the most remarkable events, have scarcely noticed him.

III. What man ever obtained more renown than Jesus Christ? The whole Jewish People predicted him before his coming. The Gentile world adored him after his coming. Both Jews and Gentiles look to him as their centre. And yet, what man ever enjoyed less of this renown? Of the thirty-three years of his life, thirty were passed in retirement. In the remaining three, he was treated as an impostor; the priests and the chiefs of the nation rejected him; his acquaintance and relations despised him. At last he suffered an ignominious death, betrayed by one of his Apostles, denied by another, deserted by all.

What, then, did he obtain by this renown? Never had man more renown—never had man more ignominy. All this renown was for our sakes, that we might recognise him: it was of no advantage to himself.

IV. Jesus Christ speaks of the greatest things so simply, that it seems as if he had not thought upon them, and yet with such clearness, as convinces us, that he did think upon them. This union of perspicuity and simplicity is admirable.

Who taught the evangelists the qualities of real heroism, in order to delineate them so perfectly in the character of Jesus Christ? And why do they describe him as feeble in his agony? Did they not know how to describe firmness in death? Certainly they did; for one of them (St. Luke) exhibits it in the person of Saint Stephen. They describe Jesus as capable of fear, before it behooved him to die, but then perfectly calm. When he was troubled, the perturbation arose from within; but when men assailed him, he was unmoved.

The church has been obliged to prove that Jesus Christ was man, against the impugners of his humanity, as well as to prove that he was God; and appearances were as much against one as the other.

Jesus Christ is a God to whom we approach without pride, and before whom we are humbled without despair.

V. The conversion of the Pagans was reserved for the Messiah. The Jews either did not attempt it,

or attempted it without success. All that Solomon and the Prophets had written was useless. The philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, could never induce men to adore the true God.

Nothing is said of the life of the Virgin Mary in the Gospels, till the birth of Jesus Christ; every thing is said in relation to him.

Both Testaments point to Jesus Christ—the Old as the object of hope, the New as the object of imitation; and both as their centre.

The prophets foretold future events, but were not the subjects of prophecy. The saints of the New Testament were the subjects of prophecy, but are not prophets. Jesus Christ was prophesied of, and uttered prophecies.

Jesus Christ was for all; Moses for a single nation. The Jews were blessed in Abraham: "I will bless those that bless thee," Gen. xii. 3. But all nations are blessed in his seed, Gen. xviii. 18. "A light to lighten the Gentiles," Luke ii. 32. "He hath *not* done so to *every* nation," Ps. cxlvii. 20. said David, speaking of the law. But speaking of Jesus, it must be said, he *hath* done so to *every* nation.

Thus it is the prerogative of Jesus Christ to be a universal blessing. The church offers sacrifice only for the faithful, Jesus Christ offered himself on the cross for all.

CHAPTER XV.

PROOFS OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE PROPHECIES.

I. THE strongest proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ are taken from prophecy. And, that there may be no defect in this branch of evidence, God has made it, by the successive accomplishment of predictions, a standing miracle from the commencement of the church to the end of time. Prophets were raised up among the Jews during a period of sixteen hundred years, and at the captivity, the prophetic writings were dispersed with the nation itself, for four centuries, over all parts of the earth. Thus the way was prepared for the advent of the Messiah; for, since his Gospel was intended for general acceptance, it was requisite that the prophecies should not only exist, but be spread over the world, in order that, with these evidences before their eyes, all men might believe.

Supposing a single prophet had foretold the exact time and manner of the Messiah's appearance, the perfect coincidence of the event with his predictions would be of immense weight. But in the instance before us, there is much more. Here is a succession of men, for four thousand years, who constantly, and without discrepancy, predict the same event. Here is a whole people, who are his heralds, and who have subsisted for four thousand years, main-

taining their belief in his coming—a belief which no threatenings or persecutions could prevail in them to disavow. This is very striking.

II. The time of the Messiah's appearance was marked out by four things, namely, the state of the Jewish nation, the state of the heathen world, the state of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the number of years between the prediction and the event.

The Prophets specified several signs of the Messiah's advent, which must, of course, come to pass at the same time. Thus, it was necessary that the fourth monarchy should be established, when the seventy weeks of Daniel were accomplished; that the sceptre should depart from Judah, and that then the Messiah should appear. At that time, Jesus Christ did appear, and declared himself the Messiah.

It was predicted, that, under the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, before the Jewish polity was at an end, and in the seventieth week of Daniel, the Gentiles should be instructed, and brought to the knowledge of the God of the Jews, and his sincere worshippers should be delivered from their enemies, and filled with his fear and his love.

And it came to pass, during the fourth monarchy, and under all the circumstances just mentioned, that multitudes of gentiles worshipped the true God, and led an angelic life: women devoted their virginity and their lives to religion, and men renounced all sensual indulgences. What Plato

could not effect even among a few select and refined spirits, a secret energy, by means of a few words, effected in thousands of uneducated men.

And how shall this be explained? It is what had been foretold long before: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh," Joel ii. 28. All nations were given up to unbelief and carnality; yet suddenly the flame of divine charity was kindled; princes renounced their grandeur; the rich surrendered their wealth, even women endured martyrdom, and children forsook their homes to wander in deserts. What power produced these extraordinary effects? The Messiah had appeared, and these were the consequences and signs of his advent.

For two thousand years, the God of the Jews was unknown to the heathen world; but, at the time predicted, the Gentiles, in crowds, worshipped this God alone. The temples of their idols were destroyed, and kings themselves submitted to the Cross. And whence came this? Why, from the Spirit of God poured forth upon the earth.

It had been predicted, that the Messiah would establish a new covenant with his people, which should cause them to forget their coming out of Egypt; that he would write his law, not on tables of stone, but on their hearts (Isaiah li. 7.); that he would put his fear in their hearts (Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 40.); that the Jews would reject Jesus Christ, and that they would be rejected by God, because the vine which he had planted brought forth wild grapes (Isaiah, v. 2, 3, 4, &c.); that his chosen people would be treacherous, ungrateful, and

unbelieving—" a rebellious people walking in a way that is not good," Isaiah lxv. 2.; that God would smite them with blindness, and that they should grope at noon-day like the blind (Deut xxviii. 28, 29.); and that the church should be small in its formation, and afterwards mightily increase (Ezek. xlvii.)

It had been also predicted, that idolatry should be overthrown; that the Messiah would destroy all idols, and cause their images to cease, and lead men to the worship of the true God (Ezek. xxx. 13.); that the idol temples should be cast down, and that, among all nations, and in every place, a pure offering, and not burnt sacrifices, should be offered (Mal. i. 2.); that the Messiah would teach men the perfect way (Isaiah ii. 3. Micah iv. 2.); that he should be king of the Jews and Gentiles (Ps. ii. 6. 8. lxxi. 8.)

And there never has existed a man, either before or after Christ, who, pretending to be the Messiah, has taught any thing approaching to this.

But Jesus Christ, after his advent had often been foretold, appeared, and said, 'The time is fulfilled; I am he.' He declared, That men had no enemies but themselves; that their evil hearts alone separated them from God; that he came to deliver them from their iniquities, to bestow his grace upon them, and to form, out of all mankind, a holy church; to unite in one spiritual body Jews and Gentiles; to destroy the idolatry of the one, and the superstition of the other. What your prophets, said he, have foretold would come to pass, that my apostles are

about to effect. This nation will be rejected by God; Jerusalem will be soon destroyed; and the Gentiles will be brought to the knowledge of God, by the preaching of my Apostles, when you have slain the heir of the vineyard. Accordingly, after his ascension, the Apostles declared to the Jews the destruction that awaited them; and invited the Gentiles to the service of the true God.

But all men, owing to their natural depravity, were opposed to the design of Christ's coming. This king of Jews and Gentiles was persecuted by both, and put to death by them. All that was great in the world combined against the rising Religion: the learned, the philosophic, and the powerful. Some wrote against it, others disputed against it, and a third class employed secular power against it. But, in the face of this various opposition, we see Jesus Christ, in a little time, reigning over Jews and Gentiles, destroying the Jewish worship at Jerusalem, which was the centre of it, and where he formed his first church; and abolishing the idol-worship at Rome, which was likewise *its* centre, and where he formed his principal church.

Unlettered men, without external authority, for such were the Apostles and first Christians, withstood all the powers of earth, made the powerful, the learned, and the philosophic, submit to them, and destroyed the long established systems of idolatry. And their only instrument was the force of that word, which had foretold it.

The Jews, by putting Jesus Christ to death, rather than they would receive him as the Messiah,

fixed upon him the final mark of being the Messiah. By refusing to acknowledge him during his life time, they became unexceptionable witnesses; and by putting him to death, and continuing to reject him, they fulfilled the Prophecies. But who among us, can refuse to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, after reviewing the numerous particular circumstances which have been foretold respecting him? It was predicted, that he should have a forerunner (Mal. iii. 1.); that he should be born an infant (Is. ix. 6.); that he should be born in the town of Bethlehem (Micah v. 2.); of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10.); of the posterity of David (2 Sam. vii. 12—16. Isaiah vii. 14, &c.); that Jerusalem should be the principal scene of his appearance (Mal. iii. 1. Hag. ii. 9); that he would close the eyes of the wise and learned (Is. vi. 10.), and proclaim glad tidings to the poor and the needy (Is. lxi. 1.); that he would open the eyes of the blind, give health to the sick, and cause light to shine on those who were in darkness (Is. xlii. 6); that he should teach the perfect way (Is. xxx. 21.) and be the light of the Gentiles (Is. xlii. 6); that he should be a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Is. liii. 5.); that he should be a precious corner stone (Is. xxviii. 16.); that he should be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Is. viii. 14.); that many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem should fall on this stone, and be broken (Is. viii. 15.); that the builders should reject this stone (Ps. cxvii. 22.); that God would make this stone the head stone of the corner (Ps. cxvii. 22.); that this stone should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35.); that he must

be rejected (Ps. cxviii. 22.); unknown (Is. liii. 2, 3.) betrayed (Ps. xli. 9.); sold (Zech. xi. 12.); buffetted (Is. l. 6.); mocked (Ps. xxxv. 16.); vilified in numberless ways (Ps. lxix. 7.); received gall for drink (Ps. lxix. 21.); pierced in his hands and feet (Ps. xxii. 16.); spit upon (Is. l. 6.); put to death (Dan. ix. 26.); and that lots should be cast for his garment (Ps. xxii. 18.); that he should rise again the third day (Ps. xvi. 10. Hosea, vi. 2.); that he should ascend to heaven (Ps. xlvii. 5. lxviii. 18.); and sit at the right hand of God (Ps. cx. 1.); that kings should set themselves against him (Ps. ii. 2.); that being at the right hand of his Father, he should be victorious over all his enemies (Ps. cx. 5.); that the kings of the earth and all people should worship him (Ps. lxxii. 11.); that the Jews should exist as a distinct nation Jer. xxxi. 36.); that they should wander among all nations (Amos ix. 9.); without a king, without sacrifices, without an altar (Hosea iii. 4.); without prophets (Ps. lxxiv. 9.); expecting salvation, but not finding it (Is. lix. 9. Jer. viii. 15.)

III. The Messiah, it was predicted, would form for himself a great people, elect, holy, and precious. It was further declared, that he would guide and support them, and lead them into a place of holy rest; consecrate them to God, by making them his temple; reconcile them to God, and deliver them from his wrath; free them from the slavery of sin, which so visibly tyrannizes over mankind; give them laws, and engrave those laws on their hearts; and finally offer himself to God for them as a sacrifice, a

spotless offering—himself also the priest, presenting his body and blood to God, and also bread and wine: Jesus Christ performed all this.

It was predicted, that a deliverer would come, who would break the serpent's head, and deliver his people from their sins, and from all their iniquities (Ps. cxxx. 8.); that he would make a new covenant, which would be eternal; that he would be of a priesthood distinct from the Jewish, according to the order of Melchisedec, which would be everlasting. It was also predicted, that the Messiah must be glorious, powerful, and mighty, and, nevertheless, so mean in external appearance, as not to be recognized in his real character; that he would be rejected, and put to death; that his people who had denied him, would be his people no longer; that the Gentiles would receive him, and put their trust in him; that he would forsake Zion, to reign in the chief seat of idolatry; though the Jews would still continue to exist; and that he would arise out of Judah, when the sceptre had departed from among them.

IV. Let it be considered, that from the earliest ages, the expectation or the adoration of the Messiah has continued without interruption; that he was promised to the first man immediately after the fall; that subsequently he was known to men who declared, that God had revealed to them that a saviour would be born, who should redeem his people; that Abraham declared, it was revealed to him, that this great personage would descend from his son Isaac; that

Jacob declared he would be born of the tribe of Judah; that Moses and subsequent prophets pointed out the time and manner of his coming; that they affirmed the law they were under was only preparatory to that of the Messiah, which would endure for ever; that thus either their law or that of the Messiah, of which it was the earnest, would always exist, and in fact, had always existed; and lastly, let it be considered, that Jesus Christ came according to all the circumstances predicted.—This is worthy of admiration.

If the Messiah's advent was so clearly predicted to the Jews, it may be asked, Why did they not believe on him? or how is it that they have not been destroyed for refusing to believe a thing so evident? I answer, that both these facts were predicted—the unbelief of the Jews, and their continuing to exist as a Nation. And nothing is more for the glory of the Messiah. It was not enough that there should be prophecies; it was necessary that they should be preserved without suspicion of being corrupted.

V. The Prophetical Writings are composed of predictions of particular events, and of those relating to the Messiah, in order that the prophecies respecting the Messiah might not be without proof, and that the predictions of particular events might not be destitute of a secondary advantage.—"We have no king but Cæsar," said the Jews, John xix. 15. Then Jesus Christ was the Messiah, since they had no king but a foreigner, and wished for no other.

The seventy weeks of Daniel are ambiguous, as

to the time of their commencement, on account of the terms of the prophecy; and as to the time of their end, on account of the diversities of chronologists. But all this will not make a difference of more than twenty years.

The prophecies which describe the Messiah as poor, describe him also as Ruler of the nations (Zech. ix. 9, 10.) The prophecies which predict the time, predict him only as Ruler of the nations, and suffering, and not as coming in the clouds to judgment. And those which describe him as judging the nations in his glory, do not mark the time.

When the Messiah is spoken of as great and glorious, it is evidently in his character as Judge of the whole world, and not as its Redeemer, (Is. lxvi. 15, 16.)

CHAPTER XVI.

VARIOUS PROOFS OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. If the testimony of the Apostles was undeserving of credit, they must have been either deceived themselves or deceivers. It is difficult to maintain either supposition. As to the first, it was impossible for men in their senses to believe that they beheld a man restored to life whom they had seen expire, and laid in the grave, unless he had really risen from the dead; and as to the hypothesis, that they were impostors, nothing can be more absurd. Only follow it out. Imagine these twelve men meeting together after the death of Jesus Christ, to frame a tale about his resurrection, and on the faith of it, daring the united force of all the religious and civil establishments in the world. The human heart, we know, is prone to levity and change, easily moved by promises of worldly advantage. If by such motives, or by the still more powerful ones of a different class, by the prospect of imprisonment, torture, and death, one of their number had been induced to contradict himself, they and their scheme would have been ruined for ever. Pursue this thought to its legitimate consequences.

As long as Jesus Christ was with them, his example might support them. But if after his death he did not appear to them again, what encouragement had they to proceed?

II. In reading the Gospels, among many other qualities of the narrative that excite our admiration, one is struck with the total absence of invective against Judas, or Pilate, or any of the enemies of Jesus Christ, or of the persons engaged in putting him to death.

Had this reserve of the evangelical historians been only assumed, as well as many other beauties in their compositions, and assumed for the purpose of attracting notice, even supposing they had refrained from alluding to it themselves, yet they would have set their friends upon pointing it out for their advantage. But, as they wrote without artifice or any private ends, they made use of no such device to gain applause. I know not whether this has ever been remarked before; a proof of the artlessness with which the thing was done.

III. Jesus Christ wrought miracles: so did his Apostles and the Primitive Christians: and for this reason, that, since many of the prophecies were to be accomplished by their instrumentality, miraculous powers formed the necessary credentials of their mission. It was predicted, that the nations of the earth should be converted by the Messiah. How could this prophecy be accomplished without the conversion of the Gentiles? And how could they be converted to Jesus Christ as long as the final proof was wanting of his being the Messiah? Till after his death and resurrection, and the conversion of the Gentiles, all was not accomplished: in the mean time, therefore, miracles were requisite. In our day they are

no longer wanted, to prove the truth of the Christian Religion; for the accomplishment of the prophecies is a standing miracle.

IV. The present condition of the Jews is a strong argument for the truth of our Religion. It is very striking to observe, that this people has existed for so many centuries, and yet always in a state of depression. It was necessary they should exist, as an evidence of the Messiah, and that they should be reduced to so abject a condition, because they crucified him: and although their continued existence might seem incompatible with the sufferings they have had to endure, yet they have subsisted notwithstanding all their calamities.

But were they not, it may be asked, nearly in the same state at the Babylonish captivity? By no means. The sovereign authority was not abrogated by that event, inasmuch as their return was promised and predicted. When Nebuchadnezzar led away the People, they were told, lest they should suppose that the sceptre was taken from Judah, that, after being in a foreign land for a short time, they should be restored. During the whole period of their captivity, they were consoled by the prophets, and the succession of their kings was preserved. But the second national catastrophe is without promise of re-establishment, without prophets, without kings, without consolation, without hope; for the sceptre is taken away for ever.

They could scarcely be said to be in captivity

when they were assured of being delivered in seventy years. But in their present condition, they have no such hope.

God promised, that though he dispersed them to the ends of the earth, yet, if they were faithful to his law, he would reassemble them. They have faithfully adhered to it, and still continue in subjection to the nations among whom they dwell. The inference is, that the Messiah has come, and that the law which contained these promises is abrogated by the establishment of a new dispensation.

V. If the Jews had all been converted to Jesus Christ, they would have been looked upon as suspicious witnesses; and if they had been exterminated, we should have lost their testimony altogether.

The Jews, in general, rejected Christ, but not all of them. The pious received, and the carnal rejected him. But this is so far from lessening his glory, that, on the contrary, it puts the finishing stroke to it. The reason they assign for their rejection of Jesus Christ, and the only one that can be found in the Talmud and the rabbinical writings is, that he did not subdue the Gentiles by an armed force. "Jesus Christ was put to death," say they; "he was himself overcome; he did not conquer the heathen; he enriched us not with their spoils." And is this all? What they considered defects, only make, in my estimation, his character more admirable, and far superior to the representations of their fancy.

VI. How delightful is it to see, by the eye of faith, Darius, Cyrus, Alexander, the Romans, Pompey, and Herod, all contributing, without being aware of it, to the glory of the Gospel!

VII. Mahometanism is founded on the Koran and Mahomet. But this prophet, who gave himself out to be the final hope of the world, was he ever the subject of prophecy? What sign of a commission from heaven did he possess which any other man may not pretend to, who chooses to call himself a prophet? What miracles did he ever perform? What mystery has he taught, even according to his own showing? With what scheme of morals or of happiness has he enlightened the world?

Mahomet is unsupported by authority. His reasonings, then, ought to be very powerful, since they depend entirely on their own strength.

VIII. If two persons were speaking apparently on common subjects, but the language of one had a double sense, understood by his followers, and that of the other only one sense, a person not in the secret would pass the same judgment on both. But supposing, in the sequel, the former should utter sublime truths, and the latter mean and trivial things, and even absurdities, the bystander would then judge that the former had been talking mysteriously, but that the latter had not: the one having shown that he was incapable of absurdities, but capable of being mysterious; the other showing that he was incapable of uttering mysteries, but very capable of absurdities.

IX. I do not wish a judgment to be formed of Mahomet by those parts of the Koran that are obscure, of which it might be said, that they have a recondite meaning; but by the plainest passages—by his Paradise, and such like scenes. In these he appears ridiculous. But, how different are the Scriptures! I allow there are obscurities; but then, other parts are perfectly perspicuous, and the fulfilment of many of the prophecies is unquestionable. The parallel, therefore, which some are disposed to make, will not hold good. We must not confound and equalize things that are not equal. The resemblance is partial; for it is only in the occasional obscurities of both, and not in that divine splendour and luminousness, by which holy writ claims our reverence for its darker passages.

The Koran asserts, that St. Matthew was a good man. It follows, that Mahomet was a false prophet, either in calling those persons good who were impostors, or if they were not impostors, in not believing what they declared respecting Jesus Christ.

X. It required no supernatural power to effect what Mahomet effected. He was never foretold, and wrought no miracle; but no man could ever perform what Jesus Christ performed.

Mahomet established a religion by putting his enemies to death; Jesus Christ, by commanding his followers to lay down their own lives. Mahomet interdicted his followers from reading their sacred writings; Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to

read theirs. In fine, their plans were so totally different, that if Mahomet, humanly speaking, took the way to succeed, Jesus Christ took the way to insure a failure. And instead of inferring, that, since Mahomet was successful, Jesus Christ might be still more successful, we conclude, that, since Mahomet succeeded, Christianity must have perished, had it not been supported by Heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DESIGN OF GOD IN CONCEALING HIMSELF FROM SOME, AND DISCOVERING HIMSELF TO OTHERS.

I. It is the design of God to redeem mankind, and to bestow salvation on those who sincerely seek it. But such is the demerit of our race, that he may most justly refuse to some, on account of their hardness of heart, what he grants to others by that mercy which they cannot claim. Had he been disposed to overcome the obstinacy of the most hardened, he might have effected it by such a manifestation of himself, as would have rendered it impossible to doubt of his existence. It is thus he will appear at the consummation of all things, when, amidst thunders and lightnings, and the general convulsion of nature, he will force the blindest to behold him.

But it is not in this manner that he has been pleased to appear in his advent of Mercy. Numbers of mankind had rendered themselves so unworthy of his clemency, that he resolved to leave them in destitution of a boon they made light of. Justice did not require that he should appear with such palpable marks of Divinity as would convince all men; and, on the other hand, it would have been unjust to come so disguised as not to be recognized by those who sincerely sought him. To these, accordingly, he renders himself easily discernible, and,

in short, as it is his intention to be visible to those who seek him with all their hearts, and concealed from those who are equally disposed to shun him, he so regulates his communications with mankind, that the signs of them are plain to those who seek him, and obscure to those who do not seek him.

II. There is light enough for those who are disposed to see, and darkness enough for those who are disinclined. There is illumination sufficient to inform the elect, and obscurity sufficient to humble them. There is obscurity sufficient to prevent the reprobate from seeing, and illumination sufficient to condemn them, and to render them inexcusable.

If the world existed simply for the purpose of impressing mankind with the existence of the Deity, his divinity would beam forth, from all parts of it, with unshaded splendour; but, as it subsists by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, to instruct men in the two great facts of the fall and the redemption, these are the truths of which the proofs are every where apparent. Whatever we behold, marks neither the total absence nor the unveiled manifestation of Deity, but the presence of a God who hideth himself: all things bear this impress.

Were there no appearances of Deity, such a universal blank would be equivocal, and might be supposed to indicate as much the total absence of Deity, as the unworthiness of men to receive his manifestations. But the occasional glimpses and obscure intimations of his presence take away the ambiguity. A single manifestation proves his existence, and that he

always exists; and we infer from it, that there is a God, and that men are unworthy of communion with him.

III. The design of God is rather to rectify the will, than to satisfy the understanding. If there were no obscurity in religion, the understanding might be benefited, but the will would be injured. In the absence of obscurity, man would not be sensible of his fallen state; and were he left in total darkness, he would despair of a remedy: so that it is not only just, but advantageous for us, that the Deity should be partially manifested; since it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own corruption, and to know his corruption without knowing God.

IV. We may learn from every quarter something respecting our condition; but let us guard against mistakes: for it is not true that God is wholly manifest, nor is he totally concealed. But it is invariably true, that he conceals himself from those who tempt him, and manifests himself to those who seek him; for mankind are, at the same time, unworthy of God, and capable of being restored to his favour: unworthy by their depravity, but capable by the constitution of their nature.

V. Every thing in the world shows either the unhappy condition of man, or the mercy of God; either the weakness of man without God, or the power of man assisted by God. The whole universe bears witness

to the corruption or the redemption of man. Every thing betokens his grandeur or his degradation. The withdrawment of God is seen among the Pagans; the protection of God is seen among the Jews.

VI. Every thing tends to the good of the elect, even the obscurities of Scripture; for they reverence them on account of the divine illumination of other parts of the sacred volume: and every thing is perverted to a bad purpose by the impious—even the most luminous parts of Scripture; for they blaspheme them on account of the remaining obscurities, which are above their comprehension.

VII. If Jesus Christ had come only for the purpose of Redemption, the whole of Scripture, and all things else, would have co-operated to that end; and nothing would have been easier than to convince infidels: as, however, he came for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, we cannot overcome their obduracy. But this is no argument against the truth of our sentiments; since we maintain, that it is agreeable to the whole course of the divine dispensations that no conviction shall be produced in the minds of the self-willed, and those who are not sincere seekers of truth.

Jesus Christ came that those who saw not might see, and that those that saw might become blind: he came to cure the sick, and to leave the whole to perish; to call sinners to repentance, and justify them; and to leave in their sins those who thought

themselves righteous; to satisfy the needy, and send the rich empty away.

What do the prophets predict respecting Jesus Christ? That he would appear evidently as God? No. But that he would be indeed a God that hideth himself; that he would not be known nor received by the Jewish nation at large as the Messiah; that he would be a stone of stumbling, on which many would fall. That the Messiah might be recognized by the pious, but be indiscernible to the ungodly, the Almighty so ordered it, that the prophecies should be of a mixed character, neither perfectly plain, nor totally obscure. Had the manner of the Messiah's appearance been clearly predicted, there would have been no obscurity even to the wicked. If the time had been obscurely predicted, there would have been obscurity even to the pious; for the rectitude of their hearts could never have informed them that, for instance, a *Mem* ם, signifies 600 years. The time, therefore, has been predicted clearly, but the manner in figures.

By this means, the wicked taking the blessings promised to mean temporal good, have egregiously erred, although the time has been clearly predicted; and the pious have not erred, because the right apprehension of the nature of the promises depends on the state of the heart: for men call that good which they love. But the determination of the precise time does not depend on the heart: thus the prediction of the time being clear, but the nature of the blessings being obscure, the wicked only could be misled.

VIII. How are these two characteristics of the Messiah to be reconciled; that in his person the sceptre should remain for ever in Judah, and yet that, at his advent, the sceptre should be taken away from Judah? Nothing could be better adapted than this to verify the saying of the prophet, that seeing, they should not see, and understanding, they should not understand.

Instead of complaining that God is so concealed, it is the duty of men to bless him, that he has so far revealed himself, and also, that he has not discovered himself to the worldly wise, or to the proud, who are unworthy to know so holy a God.

IX. The genealogy of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament is so mixed with a number of unimportant matters as scarcely to be distinguishable. If Moses had registered only the ancestors of Jesus Christ, the line of descent would have been too palpable; yet, as it now stands, it may be discovered, on close inspection, and traced through Tamar, Ruth, &c.

Let no one, then, reproach our religion with its defect of clearness, since we profess this to be its character. But let the truth of religion be acknowledged even in its obscurity, in the little knowledge we have of it, and in the indifference we feel about knowing it.

If there had been no false religions, or if there had been martyrs only in ours, God would have been too manifest.

Jesus Christ, to leave the impious in their blind-

ness, never said that he was not of Nazareth, nor that he was not the Son of Joseph.

X. As Jesus Christ remained unknown among men, so truth remains unknown among vulgar opinions, without any external difference: thus the Eucharist among common bread.

If the mercy of God is so great that even when he conceals himself, he gives us the knowledge of salvation, how great will be our illumination when he discovers himself!

We can understand none of the works of God unless we assume, as a first principle, that he blinds some and enlightens others.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT TRUE CHRISTIANS AND TRUE JEWS ARE OF THE SAME RELIGION.

I. THE Religion of the Jews apparently consisted in their relationship to Abraham, in the rite of circumcision, in sacrifices, and ritual observances, in the ark, in the Temple of Jerusalem, and in the Mosaic law and covenant.

I affirm, that it did not consist in any of these things, but only in the love of God, and that God rejected every thing else—that God had no regard to the carnal people who were the descendants of Abraham—that the Jews were punished by God like strangers, if they offended him: "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish," Deut. viii. 19, 20.—that strangers were received by God, like the Jews, if they loved him—that the true Jews valued their relationship to God, and not to Abraham: "Doubtless, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer," Is. lxiii. 16.

Even Moses declared to his countrymen, that God was not influenced by partialities towards persons—

"God regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward," Deut. x. 17.

I affirm, that circumcision of the heart was enjoined: "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible," Deut. x. 16, 17. Jeremiah iv. 4—that God declared, that it should be brought to pass: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx. 6. —that the uncircumcised in heart were to be judged: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; all the house of Israel that are uncircumcised in heart," Jeremiah ix. 25, 26.

II. I affirm, that circumcision was a symbol, prescribed to distinguish the Jews from all other nations (Genesis xvii. 11.) For this reason, when they were in the wilderness, they were not circumcised, because they were in no danger of mixing with other nations; and, since the advent of Jesus Christ, it is no longer necessary.

The love of God is, on all occasions, commanded: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for

he is thy life and the length of thy days.)" Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

It is declared that the Jews, for want of this love, and for their transgressions, would be rejected, and the heathen chosen in their stead: "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not god; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation," Deut. xxxii. 20, 21. Isaiah lxv.

It is declared that earthly enjoyments are vain, and that real happiness consists in being united to God, (Psalm lxxiii.); that the feasts of the Jews were displeasing to God—"I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies" (Amos v. 21.); that the Jewish sacrifices were displeasing to God, not only those of the wicked, but those also of the good, as appears from the 50th Psalm, where, before these words, "Unto the wicked God saith," it is said, that he wished not for the sacrifices or blood of beasts (Isaiah lxvi. Jer. vi. 20.); that the sacrifices of the heathen would be received by God, and that he would withdraw his approbation from the sacrifices of the Jews (Mal. i. 10, 11.); that God would make a new covenant by the Messiah, and that the old covenant should be abolished (Jer. xxxi. 31.); that the former things should be forgotten (Isaiah xliii. 18, 19.); that the ark of the covenant should not be remembered any

more (Jer. iii. 16.); that the temple should be destroyed (Jer. vii. 13—16.); that the sacrifices should be rejected, and other pure sacrifices established (Mal. i. 10, 11.); that the Aaronic priesthood should be rejected, and that of the Messiah introduced in its stead (Psalm cx.); that this priesthood should be everlasting; that Jerusalem should be rejected, and a new name be given to the servants of God (Isaiah lxv.); that this name should be better than that of Jews and perpetual (Isaiah lvi. 5.); that the Jews should be without prophets, without kings, without princes, without sacrifices, without an altar (Hosea iii. 4.); that nevertheless the Jews should be preserved as a distinct nation. Jer. xxxi. 36.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOD CAN BE KNOWN USEFULLY ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

I. Most persons who attempt to prove to unbelievers the existence of the Deity, begin with an appeal to the works of Nature, and they rarely succeed. Far be it from me to question the soundness of proofs which are consecrated by the inspired writings. They are conformable to the reason of man, I allow; but they are not sufficiently conformable to the dispositions of those whom they are employed to convince. It should be recollected, that we are not addressing persons whose hearts already glow with vital faith, and who perceive instantaneously that every thing around them is the work of the God they adore. To such, all nature proclaims its Author, and the heavens declare the glory of God. But as for those in whom this light shines not, and in whom we wish to kindle it, who are destitute of faith and charity, and meet with nothing in nature but darkness and obscurity, we must not expect to set them right by reasonings founded on the course of the heavenly bodies, or by those common-places of argument which they are always proof against. The obduracy of their minds renders them deaf to the voice of Nature, though it sounds continually in their ears; and experience shows, that so far from persuading, there is nothing more likely to repel them,

and to render their finding the truth hopeless, than attempting to convince them by reasons of this sort, and telling them, that it is their own fault if they do not see the truth as clear as the day.

It is not in this manner that the inspired writers, who understood the things of God better than we do, have treated the subject. It is true, they tell us, that the beauty of the Creation manifests its Author; but they do not affirm that this is universally the case. On the contrary, they assure us that in every instance where this effect is produced, it is not from the simple contemplation of natural objects, but owing to a divine illumination which disposes the heart aright. "What is known of God is manifest in them; for God hath manifested it to them," Rom. i. 19. The Scriptures declare, in general terms, that God is a God concealed from men—"Verily thou art a God that hideth thyself;" and that, since the fall, men have been left in a state of blindness, from which they are rescued only by Jesus Christ, separate from whom all communication between God and ourselves is cut off. "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him," Matt. xi. 27. The same facts are implied in the numerous passages where we are told, that those who seek God shall find him. This language cannot be used respecting an object that is perfectly luminous and exposed to view. We cannot be said to search for what manifests itself at once to us.

II. The metaphysical proofs of a Deity are so

intricate, and so far removed from the usual track of men's thoughts, that they strike the mind with little force, and the persons most capable of entering into them feel the impression only while the demonstration is before their eyes; an hour after, they cannot trust their own conclusions. "Quod curiositate cognoverunt superbia amiserunt."

Besides, proofs of this kind furnish only a speculative knowledge of God; and to know him merely in this manner, is not to know him at all.

The Being whom Christians adore, is not a God who is simply the Author of geometrical truths, and of the material universe: this would be a Deity for Pagans. Nor is he simply a God whose providence extends over the lives and fortunes of men, and insures external prosperity to his worshippers. Such was Jehovah to the Jews. But the God of Abraham and of Jacob, the God of Christians, is a God of love and consolation—a God who fills the hearts and minds of his people; who gives them an inward sense of their own wretchedness, and of his infinite mercy; who unites himself to the very centre of their souls, fills them with humility, joy, confidence, and love; and renders them incapable of choosing any end but himself.

The God of Christians is a God who makes the soul feel that he is its only good; that its repose is wholly in him; that its only joy is in loving him; and who, at the same time, makes it hate every thing which seduces it, and keeps it from loving him with all its powers. That self-love, and that carnality which inthrall it, are insupportable. God has caused

it to perceive the deep infection of self-love, and that he alone can cure it.

This is what it is to know God as a Christian. But to know him in this manner, man must know at the same time his fallen state, his unworthiness, and the need of a Mediator to bring him near, and unite him to God. These truths must not be known apart; for in that case, they are not simply useless, but absolutely noxious. The knowledge of God without the knowledge of our fallen state, produces pride. The knowledge of our fallen state, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, produces despair. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ rescues us at once from pride and from despair, because there we find God, and our fallen state, and the only way of deliverance.

We may know God without knowing our fallen state, or our fallen state without knowing God; or even God and our fallen state, without knowing the means of deliverance. But it is impossible to know Jesus Christ without knowing, at the same time, God, and our fallen state, and the means of restoration; for Jesus Christ is not simply God, but he is God, the Restorer of our fallen state.

Thus all who seek to know God apart from Jesus Christ, can obtain no information that can satisfy them, or be of any real use. For either they do not proceed so far as to know whether there be a God, or, if they do, it is of no use to them, because they attempt to hold intercourse, without a mediator, with a God whom they have discovered without a Mediator. So that they relapse into atheism or

settle in deism, two things to which Christianity is almost equally abhorrent.

We must then aim simply at knowing Jesus Christ, since through him alone we can hope to know God in a manner that shall be for our real good.

He is the being who is the true God for men, that is, for unhappy and sinful creatures. He is the centre of all, the object of all; whoever knows not him, knows nothing aright, either of the world or of himself. For not only it is impossible to know God, excepting through Jesus Christ, but we cannot know ourselves excepting through Jesus Christ.

Without Jesus Christ man must remain in sin and misery; with Jesus Christ, man is rescued from sin and misery. In him is all our happiness, our virtue, our life, our light, our hope; out of him there is nothing but vice, misery, darkness, and despair; all is obscurity and confusion in the nature of God, and in our own nature.

CHAPTER XX.

THOUGHTS ON MIRACLES.

I. The truth of a doctrine is to be judged of by the miracles wrought to support it; the reality of miracles is to be judged of by the doctrine. The doctrine discriminates the miracles, and the miracles discriminate the doctrine. Both these positions are true, but not contradictory.

II. Some miracles are certain proofs of truth, and others are dubious. Now, we must have some mark to distinguish them, or they will be useless. But they are not useless; but, on the contrary, lie at the foundation of our belief. The rule, therefore, must be such as does not destroy the proof which true miracles give of truth, for that is their chief end.

If miracles were never alleged in support of falsehood we should feel complete certainty. If there were no rule to distinguish real miracles, they would be useless, and furnish no grounds of belief.

Moses has given one mark of false miracles, namely, their leading to idolatry, Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." And Jesus Christ has given us another, Mark ix. 39. "There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." Hence it may be inferred, that whoever declares openly against Jesus Christ, cannot work miracles by his authority; and consequently, whatever miracles he may perform, must be unworthy of credit. Thus we have a rule for withholding our faith in miracles, clearly defined, and from which we must be careful not to deviate. Under the Old Testament, the rule was, the tendency of miracles to lead men from God; under the New Testament, it is their tendency to lead us away from Jesus Christ.

Whenever we witness a miracle, we must either submit to its evidence, or examine whether it has marks of falsehood, that is, whether he who performs it denies God, or Jesus Christ and the Church.

III. Every religion is false which, in its theoretical principles, does not acknowledge one God as the first cause of all things, and which, in its practical principles, does not enforce supreme love to God as the final end of all things. And at this period of the world, every religion which does not acknowledge Jesus Christ is indisputably false, and miracles can be of no use in its behalf.

The Jews had a doctrine respecting God, as we

have one respecting Jesus Christ, and confirmed by miracles, with a prohibition not to believe workers of miracles, who taught a contrary doctrine; and besides that, an injunction to apply to the High Priests, and to abide by their decision. Thus it may seem that all the reasons we have to disbelieve workers of miracles, they also had for disbelieving Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Yet we are certain that the miracles they witnessed rendered their unbelief highly blameworthy; for Jesus Christ declared, that in the absence of miracles, they would have been free from guilt—"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin," John xv. 24. In his judgment, therefore, his miracles were indubitable proofs of the truth of his doctrine, and of course laid the Jews under an obligation to credit it. And in fact, the criminality of their unbelief consisted chiefly in their rejection of the evidence arising from miracles. For the evidence to be drawn from the writings of the Old Testament, could not be looked upon as demonstrative during the lifetime of Jesus. Moses, for instance, predicted that the Lord would raise up a prophet like himself; but this was not sufficient proof that Jesus Christ was that prophet, which was the point to be determined. Such declarations made it probable that he was the Messiah, and the additional evidence of miracles ought to have settled their belief.

IV. The prophecies alone could not prove Jesus to be the Messiah during his lifetime. It would not, therefore, have been criminal not to have be-

lieved in him before his death, had not miracles furnished decisive evidence of his claims. Miracles, then, are sufficient, when the doctrine is not contradictory, to impose an obligation to believe.

It was by the miracles of Jesus that Nicodemus was convinced that his doctrine came from God—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do those miracles that thou dost except God be with him," John iii. 2. He did not judge of the miracles by the doctrine, but of the doctrine by the miracles. Even where there are reasons for suspecting the doctrine, as was the case with Nicodemus in reference to Jesus Christ, from the opposition of his precepts to the traditions of the Pharisees; if there are clear and indisputable miracles to support the doctrine, the evidence of the miracles will overrule the difficulties attached to the doctrine, on the sure principle, that God cannot lead men into error.

There is a reciprocal obligation between God and man—"Come now and let us reason together," says God in Isaiah; and in another passage, "What ought I to have done to my vine which I have not done?" Is. v. 4.

Men are under obligation to God to receive the religion he sends them. God is under obligation to men not to lead them into error; but they would be led into error if the workers of miracles declared a false doctrine, of which the falsehood was not apparent to common sense, or if a greater worker of miracles had not warned them against believing the false teacher. Thus, in the case of a division in the

Church, and suppose, for example, the Arians, who, as well as the Catholics, affirm, that Scripture is on their side, had wrought miracles, but the Catholics had wrought none, men would have been led into error. For as a man who professes to make known divine mysteries has no right to be credited on his private authority, so a man who, to prove his being intrusted with divine communications, raises the dead, foretells future events, removes mountains, and heals the sick, challenges belief, and it would be an act of impiety to refuse crediting him, unless he should be refuted by one who should perform still greater miracles.

But is not God said to tempt men? May he not therefore tempt us by miracles which seem to support falsehood?

There is a great difference between tempting, and leading into error. God tempts, but does not lead into error. To tempt is to present occasions which lay us under no necessity of acting wrong. To lead into error is to put a man under the necessity of believing and following falsehood. This is what God cannot do, and what, nevertheless, he would do, if, in a case that was otherwise doubtful, he permitted miracles to be wrought on the side of falsehood.

We infer, then, that it is impossible that a man secretly holding false doctrine, and pretending to hold the truth, and to be devoted to God and the church, should work miracles, to introduce a false and sophistical doctrine. This can never be: still less can we suppose, that God, who knows all

hearts should perform miracles in favour of such a person.

V. There is a great difference between not being for Jesus Christ and avowing that we are not; and not being for him, while we pretend that we are. Persons of the former class possibly may work miracles, for they are evidently opposed to the truth, which cannot be said of the latter; and thus the defect of authority in their miracles is instantly perceived.

Miracles distinguish in doubtful cases: between Jews and Pagans, Jews and Christians, Catholics and Heretics, the calumniated and calumniators, and between the three crosses.*

We see that this has been the case in all the combats of truth against error, of Abel against Cain, of Moses against the Magicians of Pharaoh, of Elijah against the false prophets, of Jesus Christ against the Pharisees, of Paul against Bar-Jesus, of the Apostles against the Exorcists, of the Christians against Infidels, of Catholics against Heretics; and this we shall also witness in the combat of Elijah and Enoch against Antichrist. The truth always prevails in miracles.

Lastly, in a controversy respecting the true God, or the truth of religion, a miracle is never performed on the side of error, without a greater miracle being performed on the side of truth.

It is evident that, by this rule, the Jews were obliged to believe in Jesus Christ. They suspected

* See note at the end of this volume.

his pretensions, but his miracles were of infinitely greater weight than their suspicions. They ought therefore to have believed.

During the life of Jesus Christ, some believed on him, and some disbelieved, because the prophecies said the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem, while they supposed that Jesus Christ was born at Nazareth. But they should have examined with greater care whether he was not born at Bethlehem; for his miracles were so powerful, that these alleged contradictions to the Scriptures, and the obscurity of his origin, were no excuse for them, though they were the occasion of their blindness.

Jesus Christ cured a man who had been blind from his birth, and performed many other miracles on the Sabbath-day. This blinded the Pharisees, who said, that they must judge of his miracles by his doctrine.

But by the same rule, that we ought to believe Jesus Christ, we ought not to believe Antichrist.

Jesus Christ spoke neither against God nor against Moses. Antichrist and the false prophets, who were foretold both in the Old and New Testament, speak openly against God and against Jesus Christ. A secret enemy will never be permitted by God to work miracles openly.

Moses predicted Jesus Christ, and enjoined men to follow him. Jesus Christ predicted Antichrist, and forbade men to follow him.

The miracles of Jesus Christ were not predicted by Antichrist; but the miracles of Antichrist were predicted by Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ had not

been the Messiah, men would have been led into error, but they cannot well be misguided by the miracles of Antichrist; and for this reason, the miracles of Antichrist cannot lessen the authority of the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ. In short, can any one believe that, by predicting the miracles of Antichrist, Jesus Christ destroyed the credit due to his own?

Whatever reasons there may be for believing in Antichrist apply, with equal force, to believing in Jesus Christ; but there are reasons for believing in Jesus Christ, which do not exist for believing in Antichrist.

VI. Miracles were employed in laying the foundation of the Christian Church, and will be employed for its preservation till the times of Antichrist and the end of the world. And the Almighty, in order to preserve this species of evidence in his Church, has either exposed the falsehood of pretended miracles, or predicted them; and thus the divine power has shown itself superior to what might appear to us supernatural, and we ourselves have been raised above it. We may rest assured that it will be the same in future: either God will not allow false miracles, or he will provide greater miracles as an antidote; for such is the influence of miracles over the human mind, that it is necessary that God should warn us against them when they are in opposition to him, however clear the evidence of his existence may be, or we should be thrown into the utmost perplexity.

So far, therefore, are the passages in the 13th Chapter of Deuteronomy, which warn against believing or hearkening to those who work miracles in support of idolatry, and that prophecy in Mark's Gospel, "False Christ and false prophets shall rise, and show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, the very elect;" so far are these, and some other similar passages, from tending to lessen the authority of miracles, that nothing can give a stronger impression of their importance.

VII. That which prevents men from giving credit to real miracles is want of charity—"Ye believe not," said Jesus Christ, speaking to the Jews, "because ye are not of my sheep," John x. 26. And that which prompts men to credit false miracles, is also want of charity—"Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 10.

When I have set myself to find out the reason why pretenders to the healing art have gained such amazing credit (for we know there are folks who will trust them even in matters of life or death), the true cause has appeared to be, the existence of real remedies; for, unless this were the case, it would be impossible that so many false ones should acquire such credit. Had there been no real remedies, and had all diseases been incurable, it would have been impossible for men to have imagined the contrary, and still more that they should become the dupes of

empirics. If a man were to tell his neighbours that he could keep them from dying at all, no one would believe him, because there never was such a thing known. But they might believe that he could cure them of this or that particular disorder, because specific remedies have been ascertained by men of the greatest eminence; and thus, particular cases favouring the general conclusion, the common people, unable to discriminate, find no difficulty in crediting all accounts alike. In this way so many false effects are attributed to lunar influence, because there are some real ones—the tides for example.

And it appears to me equally evident, that there never would have been so many false miracles, revelations, and pretended communications with the invisible world, if there had been none that were real; nor so many false religions, if there had not been a true religion. Had there been no such thing, mankind would have never imagined, much less believed it; but as certain facts, out of the common course of things, have been always received by men of eminence, the consequence has been, that almost every body has acquired a propensity to believe falsehoods. So that, instead of concluding that there are no true miracles, because there are false ones, we ought to infer that there are true miracles, because false ones are so numerous: for there would be no false miracles if there were no true ones; and so many false religions would not have sprung up, but for the existence of the true religion; and the human mind having been conversant with real instances of supernatural agency, has more easily fallen into the error of

admitting a variety of others without proper evidence.

VIII. It is said, Believe in the church; but it is never said, Believe in miracles; because the mind is naturally disposed to the latter, but not to the former. The one requires to be inculcated, but not the other. God makes himself known to so very few, by these extraordinary tokens, that we ought to make the best use of such occasions: since he never issues from that concealment in which nature veils him, unless to excite our faith, that we may serve him with greater ardour, in proportion as we know him with greater certainty.

If the Almighty constantly manifested himself to mankind, belief in his existence would be no longer praiseworthy: if he never manifested himself, our faith would be faint and contracted. In general he is concealed, but discovers himself, on rare occasions, to those whom he chooses to engage in his service. That mysterious secrecy, impenetrable to human vision, which is the dwelling-place of Deity, is a striking lesson to us, to seek retirement from the world, and to live alone. In that secrecy, he remained till the Incarnation; and when, by this event, he made his appearance, he was still more concealed, by cloathing himself with humanity. He was more known when invisible, than when he became an object of sight. And, finally, in fulfilling the promise he made to his apostles, to remain with men till his last advent, he chose the most wonderful and obscure secrecy of all, namely, that under the form of the Eucharist. This

is the sacrament which St. John calls in the Apocalypse, *the hidden manna*, (Rev. ii. 17.) and I believe that Isaiah alluded to it, when he said, in the spirit of prophecy, "Truly thou art a God that hideth thyself," Isa. xlv. 15. This is the greatest possible concealment. The veil of nature which shrouds the Deity, has been pierced by many of the heathen, who, as St. Paul says, "have understood the invisible God by the things that are seen." Many Christian heretics, have discovered him under his humanity, and adored Jesus Christ as God and Man. But for us, we should esteem ourselves most happy, that we have been enlightened to discern our Maker under the forms of bread and wine. We may add, to these considerations, the mystery of the Spirit of God concealed in the Scriptures. For there are two modes of interpretation, each complete in itself, the literal and the mystical; and the Jews resting in the former, never dream that there may be another, nor think of searching for it: in the same manner, infidels seeing natural effects, attribute them to nature, without thinking of any other cause, and like the Jews, beholding Jesus Christ possessed of proper humanity, never think of ascertaining whether a higher nature also belongs to him. "We knew him not," says Isaiah, (Isa. liii. 3.); and lastly, it is thus that the heretics, seeing the perfect appearance of bread in the Eucharist, never think of discovering another substance. All things conceal some mystery: all things are veils which conceal the Deity. Christians must recognize him in every thing. Temporal afflictions conceal the eternal bles-

sings for which they are preparing us. Worldly joys conceal the eternal evils which spring from them. Let us beseech God that he would cause us to acknowledge and serve him in every thing, and let us return him unbounded thanks, that while he is concealed in all things from so many others, he has manifested himself in all things, and in so many ways, to ourselves.

IX. The sisters of Port-Royal, astonished to hear it said, that they were in the way to perdition, —that their confessors were leading them to Geneva, and taught them that Jesus Christ was not in the Eucharist, nor at the right hand of the Father, knowing also that all this was false, committed themselves to God, saying, with the Psalmist, "See if there be any wicked way in me," Psalm cxxxix. 24. What were the consequences? That place which was said to be the temple of Satan, God made his own temple. It was said that the children must be taken away—that the Institution was a nursery of hell: God made it the sanctuary of his grace. Lastly, it was denounced, that all the wrath and vengeance of heaven would fall on them; God crowned them with blessings. What a strange want of sense, to imagine that such persons could be in the way to perdition! Yet this is the opinion which the Jesuits, nevertheless, have persisted in maintaining; for they assert, that all their adversaries are heretics. If they reprove their excesses, they say that they talk like the heretics. If they say that the grace of Jesus Christ distinguishes us, and that

our salvation depends on God, this is the language of heretics. If they say that they are submissive to the Pope, it is thus (say they) that the heretics disguise and conceal themselves. If they say that we must not take away life for an apple, this is calling in question (says the Jesuits) the Catholic system of morals.

Lastly, if their opponents work miracles, it is not a mark of holiness, but on the contrary a symptom of heresy.

Such are the strange excesses into which party spirit has carried the Jesuits! If their mode of reasoning were adopted, the foundations of the Christian faith would be destroyed; for the three marks of truth are, perpetuity, and a holy life, and miracles. They have already destroyed the first by their doctrine of probability, which introduces novel opinions in the place of ancient truths: they destroy holiness of life by their corrupt morality; and now they want to render the evidence of miracles nugatory, by denying their reality, or their obvious consequences.

The adversaries of the Church deny its miracles, or their consequences: so do the Jesuits. Thus to weaken the cause of their opponents, they deprive the Church of its weapons, and make common cause with their enemies, by borrowing of them all their arguments against the reality of its miracles. For the Church has three sorts of enemies—the Jews who never belonged to its body—the Heretics who have withdrawn from it—and false Christians who foment dissensions within its pale.

These three sorts of adversaries, in general, em-

ploy different modes of attack. But here they unite their forces. As they are all destitute of miracles, and the Church has always had miracles to oppose them with, they have one common interest in eluding their force, and all make use of the same subterfuge, namely, that we must not judge of the doctrine by miracles, but of miracles by the doctrine. The hearers of Jesus Christ were of two parties; the one received his doctrine on account of the miracles, the other said, "He casteth out demons by Beelzebub the prince of demons." There were two parties in the time of Calvin; that of the Church, and that of its opponents the Sacramentarians. And now there are the Jesuits, and those whom they call Jansenists, who are contending together. But the miracles being on the side of the Jansenists, the Jesuits have recourse to the common subterfuge of Jews and heretics, that miracles must be judged of by the doctrine.

But this world is not the abode of truth; she is unknown to mankind. God has covered her with a veil which disguises her from those who will not hearken to her voice. A door has been opened for blasphemies that have assailed the fundamental principles of morality. If the truths of the Gospel are published, questions are started to obscure them, and the opposite errors are circulated: so that the common people are unable to discern them. Thus it is asked, What have you to allege that you should be believed more than others? What sign can you give? You have only words, and so have we. If you have no miracles, they say, The doctrine must

be established by miracles; and thus a truth is perverted to discredit the doctrine. And if miracles are wrought, they say, Miracles are not sufficient apart from the doctrine; and thus another truth is perverted to discredit the miracles.

How pleased you are, revered fathers, to know these general rules, by which you hope to perplex us and render every thing useless! But you will not gain your point. Truth is one and indestructible.

X. If Satan aided the doctrine which tended to destroy his power, he would be divided; "and every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." For Jesus Christ has counteracted Satan, and by the destruction of his dominion over the hearts of men (of which exorcism is a figure) has established the kingdom of God, and therefore he adds, "If I with the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." Luke xi. 20.

It was impossible in the times of Moses to maintain a belief in Antichrist, because he was then unknown. But there is no difficulty in the times of Antichrist, to believe in Jesus who is already known.

Whenever schismatics produce miracles in support of their tenets, they cannot lead into error. And therefore it is not to be deemed wholly improbable, that they should be allowed to produce them. Schism is a visible thing; so is a miracle. But schism is a greater mark of error, than a miracle can be of truth. Therefore the miracle of a schismatic cannot lead into error. But when there is no schism, error is not so visible as a miracle. So that

a miracle among schismatics need not excite alarm, for the schism which is more visible than the miracle, clearly marks their error. But when there is no schism, and an error is matter of controversy, a miracle is the criterion of truth.

It is the same in reference to heretics. Miracles would be of no use to them; for the Church, whose authority is established by antecedent miracles, which have pre-occupied our belief, assures us that they have not the true faith. There can be no doubt that they have not, since the first miracles of the Church exclude belief in theirs, should they ever occur. In such a case, miracles would be opposed to miracles, but the first and greatest would be on the side of the Church: thus there would always be reasons for belief against their miracles.

From what has been said, we may judge what inference ought to be drawn respecting the miracles of Port-Royal.

The Pharisees said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath," John ix. 16. Others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do these miracles?" which of these points was the clearest?

In the present controversy, one party says, this institution is not of God; for its members do not believe that the five propositions are in Jansenius. The others say, This institution is of God, for he has wrought in it great miracles. Which of these points is the clearest?

Thus the same cause which rendered the Jews criminal for not believing in Jesus Christ, renders the

Jesuits culpable for continuing to persecute the Port-Royal Institution.

Both Jews and Christians have been charged not to believe every prophet. Yet the Pharisees and Scribes attached great importance to the miracles of Jesus Christ, and endeavoured to prove that they were either false, or the effect of satanic agency; since, had they acknowledged them to be divine, they must have believed in his mission.

We are not, at the present day, under the necessity of making this distinction: it is nevertheless a very easy one. Those who acknowledge God and Jesus Christ, perform no miracles but what are certain. But we are not required to make this distinction. Here is a sacred relic. Here is a thorn from the crown of the Saviour of the world, over whom the prince of this world has no power, which performs miracles by virtue of the blood shed for us. God has chosen for himself this institution to display his power.

It is not men who perform these miracles by an unknown and doubtful efficacy, which we might be perplexed to account for; it is God himself; it is an instrument of the passion of his only Son, who being present in many places, has selected this spot, and caused men to come from all quarters to receive miraculous relief.

The perverseness of the Jesuits exceeds that of the Jews, since the latter refused to believe in Jesus Christ, only because they doubted whether his miracles were wrought by divine power. But the Jesuits, while they cannot doubt that the miracles of Port-

Royal are of God, still continue to doubt of the innocence of the institution.

But miracles, say they, are no longer necessary, because we have had them already—so that they are now no proofs of the truth of a doctrine. Very true; but when Tradition is no longer listened to, and the people are deceived, and thus the genuine source of truth, Tradition, is closed; when the Pope, who is its depository, has been prepossessed, and Truth is no longer at liberty to show itself; when, in short, men cease to speak of the truth, Truth must itself speak to men. This is what happened in the time of Arius.

Those who followed Jesus Christ on account of his miracles, honoured his power in all the miracles it produced; but those, who, while they professed to follow him on account of his miracles, in fact, only followed him because he cured diseases or supplied their natural wants, depreciated his miracles whenever they were inconsistent with their worldly views.

In this manner the Jesuits have acted. They extol miracles, but deny those which convict themselves. Ye unjust judges! why make laws to suit your convenience? judge by those you have already established. *Vos qui conditis leges iniquas.*

The mode in which the Church has subsisted has been, that the truth has always existed in it without controversy: or if it has been controverted, there has been the Pope or else the Church.

A miracle is an effect which exceeds the natural power of the means employed: and an effect not miraculous, is one which does not exceed the power

employed. Thus those who cure diseases by the invocation of the devil, do not work a miracle, for this does not exceed the natural power of the devil.

Miracles prove the power God has over the hearts of men, by showing what power he can exercise over their bodies.

It is of importance for kings and princes to have the reputation of piety: and for this purpose they must confess themselves to you, the Jesuits.

The Jansenists resemble heretics in the reformation of manners: but you resemble them in evil.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

I. PYRRHONISM has been of service to the cause of religion; for, after all, men, before the coming of Jesus Christ, knew not their condition, nor whether their nature was great or insignificant. Those who asserted either one or the other, had no certain knowledge, and merely divined without reason and at hazard.

II. Who will blame Christians for not being able to render a reason for their belief, when they profess a religion for which they cannot render a reason, but on the contrary, declare, in announcing it to mankind, that it is foolishness? and can you complain that their religion being such, they do not prove it? If they proved it, they would falsify their own assertion; it is this very want of proof that renders what they say intelligible. But while this excuses them for presenting it as they do, and for announcing it without proof, it does not excuse those, who, after hearing the exposition of their doctrine, refuse to believe it.

III. Do you think it impossible that God should be infinite without parts? Yes. Let me show you then, a thing that is at once infinite and indivisible: it is a point moving with infinite swiftness.

Let this natural phenomenon, which beforehand might seem impossible, lead you to suspect that there may be many other truths which you do not yet know. Do not, while only in your novitiate, draw the inference, that nothing remains for you to learn; but rather infer, that there remains an infinity of things for you to learn.

IV. The conduct of God, which is always marked with benignity, is to implant religion in the understanding by arguments, and in the heart by grace. But to aim at introducing it into the heart and the understanding, by force and threatenings, is not the way to sanctify, but to terrify. Begin by commiserating unbelievers: they are already sufficiently unhappy. We must not use them harshly, excepting for their benefit; but, in fact, this will always do them harm.

The doctrines of religion are comprised in Jesus Christ and in Adam; and its morals in our native corruption and in grace.

V. The heart has its arguments, which reason knows not: this is felt in a thousand ways. It loves universal being naturally, and itself naturally, when it feels disposed; and it hardens itself against both at its pleasure. You have renounced the one and kept the other. Is this agreeable to reason?

VI. The world subsists to display the mercy and the justice of God: men are not treated as they would be were they the same as when they issued

from the hands of their Maker; but as his enemies, God in mercy bestows upon them light sufficient to return to him, if they are disposed to seek and to follow him; and sufficient to condemn them, if they refuse to seek and follow him.

VII. Let men say what they will, I must avow there is something astonishing in the Christian Religion. "You are prejudiced in its favour, because you were born in it," say some. No, far from that, I look upon it with greater caution, lest prejudice should lead me astray; but although I was born in it, I cannot help finding that it is as I assert.

VIII. There are two modes of inducing men to believe the truths of our religion; the one by the force of argument, the other by the authority of the speaker. Many people make use not of the last, but of the first. They do not say, You must believe this, for divine Revelation asserts it; but you must believe for such and such a reason.—A feeble mode of arguing, since reason may be turned various ways.

Those who appear most opposed to religion, may not be wholly useless in reference to others. We take as our first proof of it, that there is something preternatural in their conduct; for a blindness of this sort cannot be natural: and if their folly makes them act so much at variance with their true interest, it may serve at least to preserve others, by exciting horror at an example so deplorable, and a folly so pitiable.

IX. Without Jesus Christ, the world could not continue to exist; for necessarily it would be destroyed, or become a hell.

Shall the only being who knows his own nature, know it only to be miserable? Shall the only being who knows his own nature, be the only unhappy being?

It is not necessary that man should see nothing at all; nor that he should see enough to believe that he possesses truth; but he should see enough to know that he has lost it: and to know what we have lost, we must, at the same time see and not see; and this is precisely the condition of our nature.

The true religion must instruct man in his grandeur and his misery; it must lead him to esteem and to despise himself—to love and to hate himself.

I see that the Christian Religion is founded on a preceding one, and this is one evidence of its truth.

I do not speak at present of the miracles of Moses, of Jesus Christ, and his apostles, because they may not appear at first sight convincing; but I propose to bring forward those fundamental proofs of the Christian Religion, which no person whatsoever can call in question.

X. Religion is an object of such grandeur, that those who will not take the trouble to examine if it is obscure, deserve to be deprived of it. Why should men complain, if it is an object which to be found, only requires to be sought for?

Pride counterbalances and supports us against all our miseries. What a strange prodigy is man!

How plainly is he a wanderer! Behold him fallen from his high estate and restless to regain it!

Mankind being in a state of corruption, it is right that all should know it; both those who are contented with it, and those who are not. But it is not a matter of justice, that all should be acquainted with redemption.

When you say that Jesus Christ did not die for all, you favour the fallacy of the men who immediately make themselves the exception; the sentiment tends to despair, instead of preserving them from it, by cherishing hope.

XI. The ungodly, who blindly abandon themselves to their passion, without knowing God, and without giving themselves the trouble to seek him, verify, in their own persons, the fundamental principle of the religion they oppose, namely, that human nature is in a state of corruption. And the Jews, who so pertinaciously oppose the Christian Religion, verify another fundamental principle of the faith they endeavour to destroy; namely, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, who came to redeem men, and to rescue them from their corruption and misery: they verify this as much by their present condition, which was foretold by their own prophets, as by the prophecies in their possession, which they have preserved inviolate, and contain the marks by which to distinguish the Messiah. Thus proofs of the corruption of human nature, and of the Redemption by Jesus Christ, the two great verities in the Christian System, are drawn from the profane, who live in a state

of indifference to religion, and from the Jews who are its irreconcilable enemies.

XII. In the state of innocence, the dignity of man consisted in his ruling over inferior creatures, and using them; but now it consists in separating himself from them.

XIII. The errors of many persons are more dangerous from being founded on some truth. The fault does not lie in pursuing falsehood; but in pursuing one truth to the exclusion of another.

There are a great number of truths, both in religion and morals, that appear repugnant and contradictory, and which nevertheless subsist in admirable harmony.

The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths; and the source of all the objections of heretics is ignorance of some of the truths we hold.

And in general it happens, that not being able to perceive the relation of two opposite truths, and believing that the reception of the one involves the exclusion of the other, they attach themselves to one and reject the other. The Nestorians held that there were two persons in Jesus Christ, because there were two natures; and the Eutychians, on the contrary, held that there was only one nature, because there was only one person. The Catholics are orthodox, because they combine the two truths of two natures and one person.

We believe that the substance of the bread being

changed into that of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is really present in the holy Sacrament. This is one truth. Another is, that this Sacrament is also a symbol of the cross and of glory, and a commemoration of both. Here we have the Catholic faith, which comprehends these two apparently opposite truths.

The heretics of the present day, not conceiving that this Sacrament contains both the presence of Jesus Christ and his Symbol—that it is, at the same time, a sacrifice, and the commemoration of a sacrifice, believe that one of these truths cannot be admitted without excluding the other.

For this reason, they attach themselves exclusively to one point; that the Sacrament is figurative, and in this they are not heretical. They suppose that we deny this truth; and hence they object to us so many passages of the fathers in which it is asserted; but they deny the real presence, and in this they are heretical.

On this account, the shortest method of preventing heresies, is to inculcate all truths; and the surest method of refuting them is to announce all truths.

Grace will always exist in the world, and so will nature. There will always be Pelagians, and always Catholics; because the first birth produces the former, and the second birth produces the latter.

This is the Church which merits with Jesus Christ, who is inseparable from it, the conversion of all those who are not yet of the true religion; and these are the persons, who, when converted, aid the mother who has brought them forth.

The body is not any more alive without the head, than the head without the body. Whoever separates himself from either, no longer belongs to the body, or to Jesus Christ. All virtues, martyrdom, austerities, and good works, out of the pale of the Church, and of communion with the head of the Church, the Pope, are useless.

It will be one of the horrors of the damned, that they will be condemned by their own reason; that reason by which they pretended to condemn the Christian Religion.

XIV. The ordinary life of men, and that of saints, have one thing in common; namely, that they both aspire after happiness, but they differ as to the object in which they place it. Both term those things *enemies* which prevent the attainment of their main object.

We must judge of good and evil by the will of God, which can never be unjust or erroneous, and not by our own will, which is always full of unrighteousness and error.

XV. Jesus Christ has given in his Gospel this mark to distinguish true believers, That they shall speak a new language; and, in fact, the renovation of the thoughts and desires naturally causes a renovation of the language. For these divine novelties, which render it impossible to displease God, as it was impossible for the old man to please him, differ from the novelties of earth in this respect, that the things of the world, however new they may be, lose

their freshness and beauty the longer they continue, while the renovated spirit is renewed more and more as long as it exists. "The outward man perisheth," saith St. Paul, "but the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. but it will be perfectly renewed only in eternity, where it will sing for ever that new song of which David speaks in the Psalms, (Ps. xxxii. 3.) the song which is inspired by the new spirit of charity.

XVI. When St. Peter and the other apostles deliberated on the abolition of circumcision, and whether it was contrary to the law of God, they did not determine the question by the prophecies, but by the fact of the collation of the Holy Spirit to the uncircumcised. They decided that it was more certain that God approved those whom he filled with his Spirit, than that the ceremonial law was to be observed: they knew that the Holy Spirit was the end of the law, and that since it could be received without circumcision, this rite was not indispensable.

XVII. Two laws are sufficient to regulate the whole Christian community, far better than all political laws; namely, the love of God and the love of our neighbour. The Christian Religion is adapted to minds of every order. The generality of mankind content themselves with observing its present condition and establishment; and such is our religion, that its establishment alone is sufficient to convince them of its truth: other persons trace it to the apostolic age. The more enlightened trace it to the

beginning of the world. Angels have a still more comprehensive view of it, for they see it in God.

Those to whom God imparts religion, by the feelings of the heart, are very happy and perfectly persuaded. As for those who have it not, we cannot bring it within their reach, except by argument, trusting that God himself will impress it on their hearts; without which faith is inefficient for salvation.

God, in order to reserve to himself the sole right of instructing us, and to render the mystery of our condition inexplicable, has placed what forms its essence so high, or rather so deep, that we are incapable of reaching it; so that it is not by the toilsome investigations of reason, but by its unreserved submission, that we are able truly to know ourselves.

XVIII. The rejecters of Revelation, who profess to make reason their guide, ought to be well furnished with arguments. What, then, do they say?—"Do we not see the inferior animals live and die like men, and Turks like Christians? The Turks have their ceremonies, their prophets, their doctors, their saints, their devotees, as we have." But is this contrary to Scripture? does it not foretell all this? If you feel no anxiety to know the truth, what you alledge may pass as a pretext to continue undisturbed. But if you desire with all your heart to know it, this will not be sufficient; you must enter into details. Your objection, perhaps, might be sufficient, if it related to a vain speculation in philosophy, but

the matter in hand is your all. And yet, after uttering some such shallow objection, men will turn to their amusements again!

It is awful to feel that every thing we possess is hastening away, and to persist in our attachment, without being anxious to examine if there is no object attainable that will be permanent.

The tenor of our lives ought to be very different, according to these very different suppositions, That we shall be here always, or that it is certain we shall not be here long, and uncertain whether we shall be here a single hour.—This last supposition is the true one.

XIX. Even on the ground of probability, you ought to be at the pains of searching for truth. For if you die, without serving the true God, you will be lost. But say you, if it had been his will that I should serve him, he would have given indications of it. He has done so, but you neglect them. At least search for them; this must be right.

Atheists ought to have the clearest reasons for their sentiments. But that man must be destitute of all sound sense, who will assert that it is perfectly clear that the soul is not immortal. I will not find fault with any one for not sifting to the bottom the opinions of Copernicus; but it is of infinite importance to know whether the soul be mortal or immortal.

XX. The prophecies, miracles, and other evidences of our religion, are not of such a nature,

that we can say they are geometrically convincing. But for the present, I am satisfied, if you will grant that to believe them is not an offence against reason. They possess both clearness and obscurity, to enlighten some and to perplex others. But their clearness is such, that it surpasses, or at least equals, whatever clearness there may be on the opposite side; so that reason cannot decide not to receive them; and indeed it is more probable that their rejection will be owing to the corrupt propensities of the heart. Thus there is clearness sufficient to condemn those who refuse to believe, but not sufficient to compel them, in order to show that in those that follow the light, it is grace and not reason that induces them to follow it, and that in those who shun the light, it is owing to depravity, and not to reason that they shun it.

Who can help admiring and embracing a religion, which contains the fullest explication of truths of which we discern the reality, just in proportion as our illumination increases.

A man who discovers the evidences of the Christian Religion, is like an heir who finds the title deeds of his estate. Will he say that they are false, or neglect to examine them?

XXI. Two sorts of persons know that there is a God; those whose hearts are humble, and who love abasement and neglect, whatever degree of intellect they possess, whether high or low; or those who have sufficient intellect to discern the truth, whatever may be the repugnance of their hearts to it.

The Philosophers among the Pagans, who maintained that there was a God, were persecuted, the Jews have been hated, the Christians still more so.

XXII. I do not see that there is greater difficulty in believing the resurrection of the body, and the miraculous conception, than in believing the creation. Is it more difficult to reproduce man, than to bring him into being? And if we had not been acquainted with the usual mode of generation, would it have appeared more wonderful that a child should be born of a virgin, rather than be the offspring of two persons of different sexes.

XXIII. There is a great difference between repose and security of conscience. Nothing ought to give repose but the sincere search of truth; and nothing can give assurance but the possession of truth.

There are two verities of our religion, that are equally unchangeable: one is, that man in the state of creation or of grace is at the head of all the creatures on the earth, bears the likeness of God, and is partaker of a divine nature; the other is, that in a state of corruption and sinfulness he is fallen and become like the beasts. These two propositions are equally firm and certain. The Scriptures announce them most distinctly in the following passages:— "My delights were with the sons of men, Prov. viii. 31.—I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, Joel ii. 28.—I said ye are Gods, Psalm lxxxi. 6." And in other passages, such as, "All flesh is grass,

Isaiah xlix. 12.—Man is like the beasts that perish, Psalm xviii. 13.—I said in my heart, concerning the estates of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts," Eccles. iii. 18.

XXIV. The example of generous deaths among the Lacedemonians, and other heathen nations, can hardly affect us; for what is all this to us? But the examples of the Martyrs affect us; they are members of the same body. We have a bond of union and sympathy with them—their resolution may confirm our own. There is no benefit of this sort from Pagan examples—we have no connection with them. Thus the riches of a stranger are not ours, though those of a father or a husband are so most truly.

XXV. We can never separate ourselves without pain, from an object to which we are attached; we do not feel the tie, as long as we voluntarily follow that which draws us on, as St. Augustine says, but when we attempt to resist and to move in an opposite direction, our sorrow begins; the tie is strained and suffers violence: such a tie is our body, which will not be dissolved till death. Our Lord declared, that from the time of John the Baptist, that is, from the time of his entering the heart of each believer, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by storm," Matt. xi. 12. Before the soul is touched by grace, it is acted upon only by that weight of concupiscence which keeps it down to the earth. But when God draws it toward heaven,

these two contrary forces produce that conflict which God alone can terminate. We can do all things, however, says Saint Leo, by the aid of him without whom we can do nothing. We must then resolve to endure this warfare all through life, for here there can be no peace. "Jesus Christ came not to bring peace, but a sword," Matt. x. 34. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged, that as the wisdom of men is only folly before God, (1 Cor. iii. 19.) so we may say, that this warfare which wears so direful an aspect, is peace with God, that peace which Jesus Christ also brought. Yet it will not be perfected till the body be destroyed, and this makes death desirable: meanwhile we cheerfully endure to live for the love of him who endured for us both life and death, and "who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think," Eph. iii. 20.

XXVI. We must endeavour not to afflict ourselves with the events of life, and to take every thing which happens for the best. I believe that this is a duty, and that we sin in not performing it. For, in short, the reason why our sins are sins, is only because they are contrary to the will of God; and since the essence of sin consists in having a will opposed to what we know is God's will, it is plain to me, that when his will is discovered to us by events, it must be a sin not to conform ourselves to it.

XXVII. When truth is abandoned and persecuted, it seems to be a season in which its defence is a service peculiarly agreeable to God. He allows

us to judge of grace by nature, and thus we may infer, that as a prince, forced from his kingdom by his subjects, feels an extraordinary regard for those who remain faithful to him amidst the general revolt; so God looks with peculiar good-will on those, who defend the purity of religion when it is violently assailed.

But there is this difference between the kings of the earth, and the King of kings, that princes do not make their subjects faithful, but find them so; while God always finds men faithless without his grace, and makes them faithful when they become such. So that while kings generally acknowledge themselves under obligations to those who remain in their duty and allegiance, on the other hand, those who continue in the service of God are infinitely indebted to him for preserving them from defection.

XXVIII. Neither bodily austerities, nor mere intellectual efforts, are praiseworthy; but right emotions of the heart, which enable us to endure the pains both of body and mind. For two things contribute to our sanctification—pains and pleasures. St. Paul has declared, that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God, Acts xiv. 21. This should console those who suffer tribulation, since having been apprised that the way to heaven is full of it, they ought to rejoice in possessing this mark of being in the right way. But the difficulties they meet with, are not without pleasures, and cannot be overcome without pleasure. For as those who forsake God to return to the world, do so

only because they find more delight in its pleasures, than in communion with God, and are enthralled by its charms, which cause them to repent of their first choice, and make them (as Tertullian terms it) *the Devil's penitents;* so the pious would never quit the pleasures of the world to take up the cross of Jesus Christ, if they did not find more delight in poverty, in the scorn, rejection, and reproach of men, than in the pleasures of sin. Therefore, as Tertullian again remarks, we must not believe that the life of Christians is a life of sadness. They would not quit the pleasures of the world excepting for greater pleasures. "Pray without ceasing," says St. Paul,—"in every thing give thanks,"—"rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16, 17, 18. It is the joy of having found God, which is the source of sorrow for having offended him, and of a total change of life. The man who found treasure hid in a field, was so rejoiced, that he parted with all he had in order to purchase the field, (Matt. xiii. 44.) Men of the world have their sorrows, but as Jesus Christ himself affirmed, they have not that "joy which the world can neither give nor take away," John xiv. 27 and 16. The blessed in heaven have this joy without any sorrow; and Christians have this joy mingled with sorrow,—sorrow for having pursued other pleasures, and for fear of losing it by the attraction of those pleasures that still incessantly allure them. Thus we ought to labour continually to cherish that fear which protects while it attempers our joy; and whenever we feel ourselves too much inclined to the one, we should bend our minds to the other, in

order to preserve the balance. "Think of prosperity in the day of affliction, and think of affliction in the day of joy," Eccles. xi. 27. until the promise of Jesus Christ, that our joy shall be full, is accomplished. Let us not allow ourselves to sink into dejection, nor believe that piety consists in disconsolate anguish. True piety, though found perfect only in heaven, is so replete with satisfaction, that it fills the soul with it in its commencement, progress, and consummation. It is a light so resplendent, that it sheds lustre on every thing connected with it. If there is some sorrow mingled with it, especially at its commencement, this springs from ourselves, and not from virtue; it is not the effect of the piety that is beginning to exist in our minds, but of the impiety which still remains. Take away the impiety, and there will be joy unmingled. Let us not attribute sorrow, then, to devotion, but to ourselves; and seek to assuage it only by the correction of our own spirits.

XXIX. The past ought not to trouble us; we have only to lament our own faults; and still less ought the future to affect us, since, with respect to us, it is non-existent, and perhaps we shall never reach it. The present is the only time which is truly ours, and which we must employ agreeably to the will of God.

It is on this portion of existence that our thoughts ought to be chiefly occupied. Yet such is the restless disposition of mankind, that they scarcely ever bestow a thought on the present moment, the time in

which they are actually living, but fix their attention on the future in which they expect to live. They are always about to live, and are never living. But our Lord has enjoined us to be content with making provision for the day that is passing over us. This is the limit which he has prescribed for our salvation and for our tranquillity.

XXX. We may often more effectually improve our characters, by observing what is wrong in others, than by noticing examples of good; and it is well to accustom one's self to gain advantage from evil, since that is so common, while goodness is so rare.

XXXI. The 13th Chapter of St. Mark contains the sublime discourse of Jesus Christ to his apostles on his second coming: and as every thing that happens to the Church, happens also to each individual Christian, we may assume that this chapter predicts the state of every person, who, at conversion, destroys the old man within, as well as the state of the whole world, which will be destroyed preparatory to the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13. The prophecy it contains, of the destruction of the rejected Jewish temple, which prefigures the ruin of the man of sin within each of us; of which temple it is said, "that not one stone shall be left on another," indicates that we ought not to spare any affection of the old man; and by the dreadful civil wars and domestic feuds predicted, the internal conflicts of those who devote themselves to God, are so perfectly represented,

that nothing can exceed the accuracy of the delineation.

XXXII. The Holy Spirit dwells invisibly in the relics of those who die in the Lord, and will manifest himself in them at the Resurrection: this circumstance renders the relics of saints so worthy of veneration. For God never abandons his own people, not even in the tomb, where their bodies though dead to the eyes of men, are more alive than before in the sight of God; because sin, which always resides in them during life, (at least the principle of it,) is there no longer: that root of bitterness inseparable from them during life, prevents us from honouring them till death, since before that event, they are rather deserving of hatred. Death is necessary to destroy entirely this root of bitterness, and is on that account so desirable.

XXXIII. In the description of the last judgment, the elect are represented as unconscious of their virtues, and the reprobate of their crimes. "Lord," say both, "when saw we thee hungry?" Matt. xxv. 37—44.

Jesus Christ would not suffer evil spirits, or persons whom he had not called to be his disciples, to bear witness of him; but chose the testimony of God and of John the Baptist.

XXXIV. Montaigne's blemishes are very great. His writings are full of impure and loose expressions. This is bad enough, but this is not all. His senti-

ments on suicide and death are horrible. He would inspire an utter carelessness about salvation, without fear or remorse. His book not being formally on the subject of religion, he was not obliged to introduce it; but every one is under an obligation not to prejudice men against it. Whatever may be said to excuse his lax notions on many subjects, no excuse can be made for his utterly pagan sentiments on death: for all sense of religion must be lost, if a man do not wish at least to die a Christian; but throughout his writings, his only wish seems to be, to die without pain or anxiety.

XXXV. One cause of deception, in comparing former ages of the church with the present, is, that we are apt to look upon Saint Athanasius, Saint Theresa and others, as crowned with glory. They may indeed appear so to us, since time has placed their characters in a proper light. But when this great saint was persecuted, he was simply a man who went by the name of Athanasius, and Saint Theresa was a pious woman like the rest of her sisterhood. Elias was a man of like passions with ourselves, says St. James, (James v. 17.) in order to correct the false notion prevalent among Christians, which would lead them to neglect the example of the saints, as unadapted to our times. They were saints, we are apt to say, and not common mortals like ourselves.

XXXVI. The proper method of treating persons who feel a repugnance to religion, is to begin with showing them that it is not contrary to reason;

then to prove that it is venerable, in order to gain their respect; after that, to display its excellence that they may wish to find it true. We must produce indisputable arguments for its truth; we must show its antiquity and holiness, by its grandeur and elevation, and evince its excellence by its promises of the only true good.

A single expression of David or Moses, like this, "God will circumcise your heart," Deut. xxx. 6. is decisive of their spirit. Supposing all they ever wrote beside were ambiguous, and that it was even doubtful whether they were philosophers or Christians, such a phrase as this determines the point; whatever ambiguity might exist before, is entirely removed.

If we are deceived in believing the Christian Religion to be true, the consequences are trifling. But if it be true, how woful to deceive one's self in believing it to be false!

XXXVII. The conditions of life most easy to live in, according to the opinion of the world, are most difficult to live in, according to the judgment of God. On the other hand, nothing is so difficult to worldly men, as a religious life—nothing so easy in the judgment of God. According to the world, nothing is so easy as to live in splendour and opulence; in the judgment of God, nothing is so difficult as to live in such a condition, without making it our supreme happiness and our all.

XXXVIII. The Old Testament contains the

symbols of future joy, the New Testament the means of obtaining it. The symbols are joyful, the means are self-denying; and yet the Pascal Lamb was eaten with bitter herbs, (*cum amaritudinibus*, Exod. xii. 18.) to signify that we can attain joy only through sorrow.

XXXIX. The word *Galilee*, uttered accidentally among the crowd of Jews, when Jesus Christ was accused before Pilate, Luke xxiii. 5. occasioned Pilate's sending him to Herod, by which the mystery was accomplished, that he was to be judged by both Jews and Gentiles. An accident apparently, was the cause of the accomplishment of the mystery.

XL. A man told me the other day, that he felt great joy and confidence in coming from confession: another person told me, he felt great alarm. It struck me that if the feelings of both had been blended, they would have formed the right temper of mind, and that each was defective in not possessing the feelings of the other.

XLI. There is pleasure in being on board a vessel in a storm, when we feel perfectly assured of our safety. So may Christians feel during the persecutions of the Church.

The History of the Church, may properly be termed, the History of Truth.

XLII. As the two sources of sin, are pride and

sloth, God has displayed two attributes to destroy them——his mercy and his justice. The office of justice is to abase our pride; the office of mercy is to dissipate our sloth by exciting us to good works, according to that passage, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. And that expression of the Ninevites, "Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Jonah iii. 8, 9. Thus so far from the mercy of God encouraging inactivity, nothing, on the contrary, more effectually combats it; for instead of saying, because God will show no mercy we must make every effort to fulfil his commands, we should on the contrary, say, because God will show mercy, we must do all in our power to obey his will.

XLIII. "All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," 1 John ii. 16. *libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi.* Alas! for the accursed soil that these three streams of fire burn up instead of fertilizing! Happy those, who, though on these streams, are not plunged into them or carried away by them, but remain immoveable; not standing with impatience or alarm, but resting on a secure, though lowly seat, from which they rise not, till day appear, and then, having reposed in peace, they stretch forth their hands to him who will raise them on high, and cause them to stand as pillars within the gates of the holy Jerusalem, where they shall never more fear the assaults

of pride: and if they now feel sorrowful, it is not at beholding all perishable things passing away, but at the recollection of their beloved country, the heavenly Jerusalem, after which they cease not to sigh during the long days of their exile.

XLIV. A miracle, say some, would settle our belief. They say so, because they have never seen one. Reasons, which, when seen at a distance, appear to terminate our view, terminate it no longer on approaching nearer. We then see something still beyond. Nothing can check the giddiness of our minds. There is no rule, it is said, without an exception; no truth so general, as not to fail in some particular instance. It is enough that it is not absolutely universal, to give us a pretext for applying the exception to the point in hand, and for saying, such or such a thing is not always true, therefore it is not true in the present case. Nothing more is wanted than to show that this is the exception; and we must be blunderers indeed, not to find something that will serve our turn.

XLV. Charity is not a figurative precept. To say that Jesus Christ, who came to take away figures to introduce charity, did in fact only substitute the figure of charity and take away the reality, is horrible.

XLVI. How many stars has the telescope discovered to us, which had no existence to the philosophers of former days? They did not hesitate to

call the authority of the Scriptures in question, for so often mentioning the countless multitude of stars. There are only one thousand and twenty-two, said they—we are perfectly sure of that.

XLVII. Man is so constituted, that by dint of telling him that he is a fool, he will believe it; and even by dint of telling himself the same thing, he will make himself believe it; for man carries on in his bosom a converse with himself, which it greatly behooves him to regulate. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." *Corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia mala*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. We must maintain silence as much as possible, and converse respecting God alone; thus we shall convince ourselves of his presence.

XLVIII. What difference is there between a soldier and a Carthusian, as to obedience? they are equally obedient and dependent, and their duties are equally laborious. Why, the difference is this; the soldier always hopes to become a commander, though he never attains his wish, (for generals, and even princes, are always slaves and dependents;) however, he always hopes for independence, and strives continually to acquire it: while a Carthusian has vowed never to become independent. They do not differ in the perpetuity of their servitude, for that is the same to both, but in the hope of its termination, which the one has, and the other has not.

XLIX. Our self-will is never satisfied, even when

it has obtained all it desires; but we are satisfied the instant we renounce it: with it, we cannot help being discontented; without it, we cannot help being content. Man's true and only virtue is to hate himself; for his concupiscence renders him hateful: and to seek a being truly worthy of love, in order to love him. But as we cannot love that which is out of ourselves, we must love a being who can be within us, and who yet is distinct from ourselves. Now this can be none but an Infinite Being. "The kingdom of God is within us," Luke xvii. 21. The Infinite good is within us and is not ourselves.

It is not right that persons should attach themselves to us, although they do it with pleasure and voluntarily. We shall deceive those in whom we excite the desire: for we are not the end of any rational being, nor have we wherewith to satisfy such a one. Are we not always liable to death? and thus the object of their attachment must sooner or later perish. As we should be criminal to induce the belief of a falsehood, although we might persuade men with ease, and they might believe it with pleasure, and in doing so might give us pleasure; so we are criminal if we allure others to love us and dote upon us. It is our duty to warn those who are ready to assent to a falsehood, not to believe it, whatever advantage might accrue to ourselves: in like manner, we must warn men not to give their affections to us, for they ought to spend their lives either in pleasing God or in seeking him.

L. To put our trust in formalities and ceremo-

nies is superstition; but not to be willing to submit to them is pride.

LI. All the religions and sects in the world have had natural reason for their guide: Christians alone are bound to take their rules out of themselves, and to acquaint themselves with those which Jesus Christ left with the ancients to be transmitted to us. Some people are impatient of this restraint; they wish to have, like the rest of the world, the liberty of following their own imaginations. In vain we charge them as the prophets did the Jews: "Go into the midst of the Church, inform yourselves of the laws handed down from the ancients, and follow in their paths,"—they answer like the Jews, "We will not go there—we will follow the devices of our own hearts and be like others." Jer. vi. 16. Ezek. xx. 32.

LII. There are three ways of believing—Reason, Custom and Divine Influence. The Christian Religion, which alone has reason on its side, does not admit for its true disciples those who believe without divine influence. Not by any means that it excludes reason and custom; on the contrary, it opens the mind to arguments by reason, and confirms it in them by custom; but it always would have the soul submit itself to those heavenly inspirations, which alone can produce a true and saving effect; "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect," 1 Cor. i. 17.

LIII. Men never commit injustice so readily,

and with so little concern, as when they act upon a false principle of conscience.

LIV. The Jews, who were called to subdue nations and kings, were the slaves of sin: and Christians, whose calling has been to obey and be in submission, are the sons of freedom.

LV. Can it be courage in a dying man, amidst weakness and agony, to defy an almighty and eternal Deity?

LVI. I willingly believe narratives, the witnesses of which are ready to lay down their lives for their testimony.

LVII. Right fear proceeds from faith; false fear from doubt: right fear leads to hope, because it springs from faith, and men hope in God when they believe him; vicious fear leads to despair, because men fear a God in whom they have no confidence. The former class fear to lose God, and the latter to find him.

LVIII. Solomon and Job were best acquainted with the misery of man, and have spoken best upon it: the one the most happy of men, the other the most unhappy; the one knew by experience the vanity of pleasure, the other, the reality of affliction.

LIX. The Pagans spoke evil of Israel, and so did the Prophet Ezekiel; but so far from the Israelites

having a right to say, You speak like the Pagans; he enforces his declarations by this circumstance, that the Pagans spoke as he did.

LX. God does not intend that we should submit our belief to him without reason, nor does he exact a blind obedience like a tyrant. But neither does he profess to give us a reason for every thing; and to unite these two opposite views, he means to show us clearly those divine marks which will convince us what is his real character, and to establish his authority, by miracles and proofs that we cannot gainsay: after this we are to believe, without hesitation, whatever he declares, when we find no other reason for withholding our assent, except that we are unable, by our own powers, to determine whether it be true or not.

LXI. There are three sorts of persons: Those who have found God and serve him—those who are busy in seeking him, but have not found him—and those, who not having found him, live without seeking him. The first are rational and happy; the last are foolish and unhappy; the other class are unhappy but rational.

LXII. Men often mistake the imagination for the heart, and believe they are converted, because they think about being converted.

Reason acts slowly, and it needs to keep continually before it so many views and different principles, that, unable to see them all at once, its conceptions

are often indistinct and erroneous. It is not so with feeling; that acts instantaneously, and is always ready to act. Therefore, having acquired a knowledge of truth by reason, we should endeavour to feel it, and to support our belief by the sentiments of the heart; otherwise it will always be uncertain and wavering.

The heart has its arguments, of which Reason knows nothing; we feel it in a thousand ways. It is the heart which feels God, and not reason. This indeed is perfect faith, God sensible to the heart.

LXIII. It is essential to the nature of God that his justice should be as infinite as his mercy: nevertheless his justice and severity towards the reprobate, is less astonishing than his mercy towards the elect.

LXIV. Man is evidently made for thinking. In this all his dignity and all his merit consist. His whole duty is comprised in thinking justly; and the proper order of his thinking is to commence with himself, his author, and his end. But what does man think of? never of these things; but of diversion, of riches, of fame, perhaps of being a king, without reflecting what it is to be a king, or even to be a man.

The faculty of thinking, is, in itself, most worthy of admiration. It must have strange defects to be contemptible. But its defects are so great, that, in fact, nothing is more ridiculous. How elevated by its nature! How mean by its defects!

LXV. If there be a God, we must love him alone, and not creatures. The reasoning of the profane, in the book of Wisdom, is founded altogether on the persuasion, that there is no God. Let this be assumed, say they, and we may indulge fearlessly in earthly gratification. But if they knew that there is a God, they must draw the directly opposite conclusion. And such is the conclusion of the wise. There is a God, then let us not indulge in earthly gratifications. Therefore, all that excites us to fix our affections to created good is evil, since it prevents either from serving God, if we know him, or from seeking him if we know him not. But we are full of concupiscence; then we are full of evil, and we ought to hate ourselves and every thing which would fix our affections on something else than the Creator.

LXVI. When we wish to think of God, how many things are we sensible of, which divert our thoughts from him, and fix them on other objects. Every thing of this sort is evil, and born with us.

LXVII. It is not true that we are worthy of the regard of our fellow-men: it is unjust that we should desire it. If we were born capable of exercising reason, and with some knowledge of ourselves and others, we should not feel this desire. But we have this desire at our birth: we are therefore born unjust; for every man is addicted to self. This is contrary to all order; order tends to the general good, and this addiction to self is the germ of all disorders, of all contentions, in states and in families.

If the members of natural and civil communities seek the good of each general body, these communities also should seek the good of a more general body.

Whoever does not hate in himself this selfishness and instinctive love of pre-eminence, is wretchedly blind; for nothing can be more opposite to truth and justice. It is not true that we deserve such distinction; and it is as impossible, as it is unjust, that we should obtain it; since it is an object which all men are pursuing. We therefore evidently come into the world with a propensity to injustice, of which we cannot divest ourselves, and yet of which we ought to be divested.

Nevertheless, the Christian religion alone has marked this disposition as criminal, and declared that we are born with it, and that we are under obligation to resist it; nor has any other religion furnished us with the means of eradicating it.

LXVIII. There is an internal war in man, between reason and the passions. He might enjoy some peace, had he reason without the passions, or the passions without reason. But having both, he is never exempt from war; he is never able to be at peace with the one, without being at war with the other. So that he is in a state of perpetual opposition and contradiction to himself.

LXIX. It is certain, that the soul is either mortal or immortal. And it makes the utmost difference as to the conduct of life, which of these

suppositions is the true one. Yet philosophers have formed their moral systems independently of this fact. What strange blindness!

The last act is always bloody, however entertaining the rest of the play may be. We then cover the corse, and all is over.

LXX. God having made the heavens and the earth, things unconscious of happiness, resolved to create intelligent beings, who might form a body composed of intelligent members. All men are members of this body; and, in order to be happy, they must conform their individual will to the universal will, which governs the general body. Yet it often happens, that a member believes that it forms a whole of itself; and, regardless of the body on which it depends, considers itself independent, and would fain be its own centre. But in this state it will find itself as helpless as a limb separated from the human body: having no principle of life in itself, it will only be confused and astonished at the uncertainties of its existence. Afterwards, when it begins to know itself, and is brought back to its senses, it perceives that it is not the body; that it is only a member of a universal body: that to be a member, is to have being, life, and motion, only by the spirit which animates the body, and for the body; that a member separated from the body to which it belongs, is a dying and perishing thing; that it ought not therefore to love itself, excepting for the body; or rather, it ought to love that alone, since

in doing so, it loves itself, existing only in it, by it, and for it.

To regulate the love we owe to ourselves, let us imagine a body composed of thinking members, (for we are members of the universe,) and see how each member ought to love itself.

The body loves the hand; and the hand, supposing it to have a will, ought to love itself, in the same degree as the body loves it: all beyond this is unjust.

If the feet and the hands had a will of their own, they would never be in their place, except in submitting it to the will of the body: apart from this, they would be disordered and unhappy; but by aiming simply at the well-being of the body, they promote their own well-being.

The members of our body do not perceive the happy result of their union,—the wonderful skill they display,—the care nature has shown in influencing the spirits, for their growth and preservation. If they were capable of knowing it, and should make use of this knowledge, to retain in themselves the nourishment they receive, without allowing it to pass into the other members, they would not only be unjust, but miserable; and would hate, rather than love themselves. Their happiness, as well as their duty, consists in submitting to the guidance of the soul, which belongs to them as a whole, and which loves them better than they love themselves. "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," 1st Cor. vi. 17. A Christian loves

himself, because he is a member of Jesus Christ; he loves Jesus Christ, because he is the head of the body of which he is a member: the whole is one; one is in the other.

Concupiscence and force are the sources of all actions purely human: concupiscence produces those that are voluntary; force, such as are involuntary.

LXXI. The Platonists, and even Epictetus and his followers, believed that God alone was worthy of being loved and admired; and yet desired to be themselves loved and admired by men. They knew not their own corruption. If they had felt themselves impelled to love and adore their Maker, and had placed their delight in his service, they might have thought well of themselves, with good reason. But if they felt a repugnance to the Divinity, if they felt that their hearts were set upon gaining the esteem of men, and that, in cultivating their minds, they only acted in such a manner that, without employing force, men might place their happiness in loving them; such perfection, I say, was detestable. And so, then, it was possible for them to know God, and not to wish that all men might love him! They could be well pleased that men should stop short of the Supreme Being, and pay homage to them! They could desire to be the source of happiness to men, as far as that depended on being themselves the objects of their admiration!

LXXII. It is true, that pain does attend the exercises of piety. But this pain is not caused by

the piety which is commencing within us, but by the impiety which still remains. If our love of sensible objects did not obstruct our repentance, and our corruption oppose itself to the purity of God, there would be nothing painful to us in the duties of religion. We suffer pain, in proportion as our natural depravity resists supernatural grace. Our heart is torn by these two opposite forces. But it would be very unjust to impute this violence to God, who draws us to himself, instead of attributing it to the world, which strives to retain us. Our situation resembles that of an infant, whom its mother snatches from the hands of robbers, and who, in the pain it suffers, must love the affectionate and rightful violence which gives it liberty, and shrinks only from the brutal and lawless violence of those who would unjustly retain it. The most dreadful war God can wage against men in this life, is, to leave them without that war which he came to bring. "I came to bring war," said he; and, to prepare us for this war, he adds, "I am come to bring fire and sword;" Matth. x. 34. Luke xii. 49. Before his coming, the world lived in a false peace.

LXXIII. God regards only the heart; the church judges only by the exterior: God absolves as soon as he discerns penitence in the heart; the church, when she sees it in the actions of the life. God has formed a church internally pure, which confounds, by its internal and spiritual sanctity, the visible impiety of proud sages and Pharisees; and the church forms an assembly of men, whose exter-

nal manners are so pure, that they put to shame the manners of the Pagans. If there are hypocrites so well disguised that their hollowness cannot be detected, she suffers them to remain; for, though they are rejected by God, whom they cannot deceive, they are received by men, whom they can deceive. Thus the church is not dishonoured by their conduct, which has, at least, the appearance of sanctity.

LXXIV. The law does not destroy nature, but corrects and informs it; grace does not destroy the law, but gives the power to obey it. We may make an idol of Truth itself; for Truth, without charity, is not God; it is his image, and an idol which we must neither love nor adore; still less must we love and adore its opposite, Falsehood.

LXXV. All public amusements are dangerous to the Christian life; but among all that have ever been invented, none is more to be feared than the theatre. The representations it gives of the passions are so natural and delicate, that they excite and foster them in our own hearts; and more than all the rest, the passion of love, especially when presented under its purest and most honourable forms. For the more innocent it appears to innocent minds, the more liable are they to be affected by it. Its energy gratifies our self-conceit, which very soon indulges the wish to produce the effects it has seen so admirably represented; at the same time, a conviction of the propriety of the sentiments

extinguishes all alarm in pure minds, who flatter themselves that it cannot injure their purity to indulge so graceful an affection. Thus, when they leave the theatre, their hearts are so enamoured with all the charms and felicities of love, their minds are so persuaded of its innocence, that they are fully prepared to receive its impressions, or rather to seek an opportunity of producing them in another's heart, that they may receive the same pleasures and the same sacrifices of which they have witnessed so fascinating an exhibition.

LXXVI. Lax sentiments are so in unison with the natural dispositions of mankind, that it is a wonder they should ever displease. This happens, however, when they exceed all bounds. Besides, there are many persons who see the truth, but who cannot reach it in their practice. But there are very few who do not know that religion is opposed to all such notions; and that it is ridiculous to say, that eternal happiness is the reward of licentious conduct.

LXXVII. I feared that I had written amiss, when I found myself condemned; but the example of so many pious writers have persuaded me of the contrary. It is not permitted to write well.

The whole Inquisition is corrupt or ignorant. It is better to obey God than men. I fear nothing; I hope for nothing. The Port Royalists fear, and it will be bad policy, if they cease to fear; for when they no longer fear, they will have most reason to fear.

To silence men, is the severest kind of persecution. The saints never commit suicide. It is true, there must be a call; but it is not from orders of Councils, that they learn whether they are called; it is from the necessity of speaking. If my letters are condemned at Rome, that which I have condemned, is condemned in heaven.

The Inquisition and the Society (the Jesuits) are the two flails of truth.

LXXVIII. I was asked, first of all, whether I did not repent of having written the *Provincial Letters*. I replied that, far from repenting, if I had to write them over again, I would make them still more severe.

I was asked, secondly, why I mentioned the names of the authors from whom I took the detestable propositions I had quoted. I replied, If I were in a city where there were twelve fountains, and knew for certain, that one of them was poisoned, I should feel obliged to warn every one I met with, not to draw water from it; and, as my warning might be supposed to be a mere fiction of the imagination, it would be also my duty to point out the poisoned fountain, rather than expose a whole city to the chance of being poisoned.

In the third place, I was asked, why I employed a style so lively, and tinctured so strongly with raillery and humour. I replied, that had I employed the grave style of dissertation, none but men of learning would have read the work; to whom it

would have been of little service, since they knew at least as much of the subject as myself. I wished, therefore, to write in such a manner, that my letters might be read by females, and men of business, that they might be apprised of the dangerous tendency of the maxims and propositions then so current, which otherwise they might have been beguiled to receive.

Lastly, I was asked whether I had read all the authors I cited. I replied, certainly not; for had I read them, I should have spent the greater part of my life in reading very bad books. However, I had read Escobar through twice; and as to the rest, I employed some of my friends to read them: but I had not quoted a single passage, without having read it myself in the author from whom it was taken; nor without having examined the subject in discussing which it was introduced, and read the context both before and after it, that I might not make the blunder of citing an objection instead of a reply, which would have been equally disgraceful and unjust.

LXXIX. The arithmetical machine produces effects approaching more nearly to thought, than any actions of the inferior animals; but it performs nothing that will allow us to say it has a will like that of animals.

LXXX. Some authors, when talking of their works, say, *my* book, *my* commentary, *my* history, &c. They observe their neighbours have a house

of their own, and always "*my* house" at their tongue's end. I recommend them to say, *our* book, *our* commentary, &c. because in general they contain much more of what belongs to other people than to themselves.

LXXXI. Christian piety annihilates *self;* worldly politeness disguises and suppresses it.

LXXXII. If my heart were as poor as my understanding, I should be happy: for I am firmly persuaded, that poverty is a great instrument for salvation.

LXXXIII. I have remarked one thing; that, however poor persons may be, they always leave something behind at death.

LXXXIV. I love poverty, because Jesus Christ loved it. I value wealth, because it affords the means of assisting the unfortunate. I keep my word to every one. I return not evil for evil; but wish my enemies a condition like my own, in which they would receive little good or evil from their fellow-men. I aim at being always true, sincere, and faithful, to all men. I have a peculiar tenderness for those to whom God has united me most intimately. Whether I am alone, or in the presence of my fellow-men, in all my actions I have regard to that God who will judge them, and to whom I consecrate them all. These are my principles, and I will bless my Redeemer all my life, who has im-

planted them in my soul, and who, of a man full of weakness, unhappiness, concupiscence, pride, and ambition, has made a man exempt from all these evils, by the power of his grace, when there was nothing in myself but misery and horror.

LXXXV. Sickness is a state natural to Christians; for then they are, as they ought always to be, in a state of suffering, of privation of all sensual good and pleasure, free from those passions which molest them in society, without ambition, without avarice, and in the continual expectation of death. Is it not in this state that Christians ought to go through life? And is it not a great blessing to find ourselves, by necessity, in a state, such as we ought always to be in, and in which our only duty is humble and peaceable submission? For this reason, the only favour I ask of God is, that he would place me in such a state.

LXXXVI. It is a strange thing, that men long to comprehend the first principles of all things, and to know every thing! It would be impossible, doubtless, to form such a project, without a presumption, or a capacity, unlimited as nature itself.

LXXXVII. Nature has its perfections, to show that it is the image of God; and its defects, to show that it is only his image.

LXXXVIII. Men are so necessarily foolish,

that it would only be a new freak of folly, to pretend to be free from folly.

LXXXIX. Take away probability, and you can no longer please the world: only let there be probability, and you cannot displease it.

XC. The zeal of the pious to seek and practise excellence, would be useless, if probability was exchanged for certainty.

XCI. For a man to become a saint, grace is absolutely necessary: he who doubts this, knows not what it is, to be either a man or a saint.

XCII. People like certainty: they are pleased that the Pope should be infallible in matters of faith, and that the grave Divines should be unerring in their practice, in order to feel confidence in them.

XCIII. We are not to judge of the Pope by some expressions of the Fathers, as the Greeks said in council; (a most important rule certainly!) but by the actions of the Church, and the Fathers, and by the Canons.

XCIV. The Pope is chief. What other individual is known by all? What other is recognized by all, having powers to influence the whole body, because he commands the main vessel which keeps up the general circulation.

XCV. It is heretical to explain the word *all, omnes*, as meaning *universal* constantly; and it is equally heretical, not to give it that meaning sometimes. "*Bibite ex hoc omnes. Drink ye all of it:*" the Hugonots are heretical, in explaining it in the universal sense. "*In quo omnes peccaverunt. In whom all have sinned:*" the Hugonots are heretical, in excepting the children of believers. We must, then, follow the fathers and tradition, since there is danger of heresy on either side.

XCVI. The least motion affects all nature; the whole ocean is altered by a pebble. Thus in grace, the least action, in its consequences, affects every other. Every thing, therefore, is important.

XCVII. All men naturally hate themselves. We take advantage, as we can, of concupiscence, to promote the public good. But it is only a pretence, and a false image of charity: in reality, it is nothing but hatred. The wickedness of man's heart *(figmentum malum)* is only covered; it is not taken away.

XCVIII. If any one is disposed to assert, that man is too insignificant a being to be worthy of divine communications, how great must such a person's capacity be, to be able to decide the point!

XCIX. It is unworthy of God to unite himself to man in his misery; but it is not unworthy of God to extricate him from his misery.

C. How incomprehensible! what absurdities! Sinners purified, without repentance; the righteous sanctified, without the grace of Jesus Christ; God, without power over the human will; predestination, without mystery; a Redeemer, without certainty!

CI. Unity, multitude. Considering the Church as unity, the Pope is the chief of it, as a whole. Considering it as a multitude, the Pope is only one part of it. A multitude which is not reduced to unity, is confusion. Unity, in which the multitude have no influence, is tyranny.

CII. God employs no miracles in the ordinary administration of his Church. This would be strange, if infallibility resided in an individual; but as it is in a multitude, this is natural: thus the divine operation is concealed under the course of nature, as in all his works.

CIII. That the Christian Religion is unique, is no argument against its truth. On the contrary, this is one evidence that it is true.

CIV. In a republic, (Venice for example) it would be a great enormity to attempt to introduce a king, and to oppress liberty among a people to whom God has given it; but in a state where monarchy is established, the regard due to the regal authority cannot be violated, without a species of sacrilege, since the power God has attached to it, is not simply an image of his own, but a portion of it; so that it

cannot be opposed without resisting the ordinance of God. Moreover, civil war, which is a consequence of such opposition, being one of the most flagrant violations of the law of love to our neighbour, it is scarcely possible to express too strongly the heinousness of such a crime. The first Christians have left us a lesson not to revolt, but to endure with patience, when princes violate their duties.

I have as great an aversion to this crime as to assassination and highway robbery; there is nothing more contrary to my natural disposition, and to which I feel less temptation.

CV. Eloquence is the art of speaking things in such a manner, first, that those to whom they are spoken may understand them without difficulty, and with pleasure: secondly, that they may feel themselves interested, so that their self-love shall induce them more readily to reflect on the subject. It consists in a correspondence which the speaker attempts to establish between the hearts and minds of his hearers, on the one hand; and his own thoughts and expressions, on the other: this supposes that he has well studied the human heart, to understand all its springs of action, and then to find out those trains of thought, and turns of expression, that will suit it. He must put himself in the place of his hearers, and try, on his own heart, the edge of his discourse, to see if they are suited to each other, and whether he may feel assured, that his hearers will be, as it were, forced to surrender themselves. He must confine himself, as much as possible, within the bounds

of simplicity and nature, and not attempt to make what is little, great, or what is great, little. It is not enough that a thing is beautiful; it must be appropriate to the subject, so that there shall be nothing redundant, nothing deficient.

Eloquence is a picture of thought; and those who, having drawn the thought, endeavour to add something, make a piece, instead of a portrait.

CVI. Divine Revelation is a science, not of the understanding, but of the heart. It is intelligible only to those who have a right heart. The veil which was over the Scriptures for the Jews, is also there for Christians; Charity is not only the object of divine revelation; it is also the entrance to it.

CVII. If certainty were the only rational ground of action, men could never embrace religion; for it is not certain. But how many actions are performed on an uncertainty, such as travels, battles, &c. &c. If certainty alone will satisfy us, we shall do nothing, for nothing is certain; and, after all, there is more certainty of the truth of religion, than that we shall live till to-morrow: for that is not certain; but it is certainly possible that we shall not live so long. Can a similar assertion be made respecting religion? It is not certain that it is true; but who shall dare affirm that it is certainly possible that it is not true? Yet when we labour for the morrow, and at an uncertainty, we act rationally.

CVIII. Scientific inventions advance from age

to age. The virtue and the vice in the world, generally remain the same.

CIX. A wise man will have some thoughts on the back-ground, by which to judge of every thing; but in society, he will use the current mode of talking.

CX. Force is the queen of the world, and not opinion; but opinion is that which makes use of force.

CXI. Thoughts come by chance, and are lost by chance; there is no art either of preserving or acquiring them.

CXII. According to you, the Church is not to judge of what is internal, because that belongs to God, nor of what is external, because God penetrates into the internal; thus, by not allowing it to judge of character, you retain in the church the most abandoned men, even those who are so notoriously bad, that Jewish Synagogues, and the schools of Pagan philosophers would have abhorred and excommunicated them.

CXIII. Now-a-days, whoever wishes is made a priest, as it was in the time of Jeroboam.

CXIV. A multitude not reduced to unity, is confusion. A unity not dependent on the multitude, is tyrannism.

CXV. Men consult only the ear, because they want courage.

CXVI. In all our intercourse, we should be able to say to those who are offended, " Why do you complain ?"

CXVII. Children who are terrified by a countenance they have disfigured, act like children; but how comes it to pass that the being who is so feeble when an infant, is so courageous in latter life? It is not so, he only changes his weakness to other objects.

CXVIII. It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and incomprehensible that he should not exist; that a soul should be united to a body, and that we should have no soul; that the world should be created, and that it should not be created; that original sin should exist, and that it should not exist, &c.

CXIX. Atheists ought to have the clearest proofs of their opinions, but it is not perfectly clear that the soul is material.

CXX. No men are so credulous as unbelievers; they will believe the miracles of Vespasian, in order to disbelieve those of Moses.

CXXI. *On the philosophy of Des Cartes.*— We may say, in general, this is produced by figure and motion—for that is true; but to say

what figure and motion, and to compose a machine, is ridiculous, for it is useless, uncertain, and troublesome. And if it were true, we should not reckon all the philosophy in the world worth an hour's anxiety.

CHAPTER XXII.

THOUGHTS ON DEATH.

Extracted from a Letter written by Pascal on the occasion of his father's death.

I. WHEN distressed on account of the death of one whom we loved, or for any other calamity, we ought not to seek consolation in ourselves, nor in our fellow-men, nor in any created thing. We ought to seek it in God alone; and for this reason, that no creature is the first cause of the events we term misfortunes. The providence of God being the true and only source, the arbiter and sovereign, to find any substantial relief we must revert directly to the source, and trace events to their origin. Let us follow this rule, and consider that instance of mortality which now afflicts us, not as the effect of chance, or of a direful necessity, nor as the sport of the elements and parts that compose the human frame, (for God has not abandoned his chosen to the caprice of chance,) but as the indispensable and inevitable, but just and holy consequence, of a decree of Divine providence; and let us remember, that all that has happened has been continually present to God, and pre-ordained by him. If by a vigorous operation of grace, we thus regard the event, not as in itself and independently of God, but as agreeable to his just decree, and the order of his providence, its true cause, without which it would

never have happened, by which alone it happened exactly in the very manner it did happen, we shall adore in humble silence the impenetrable depth of his councils, we shall venerate the holiness of his decrees, we shall bless the conduct of his providence, and our will harmonizing with that of God, we shall will with him, in him, and for him, the thing he has willed in us, and for us, from all eternity.

II. There is no consolation but in the Truth. Socrates, and Seneca, have nothing wherewithal to console us on these occasions; they were in the error which has misled all men since the fall; they considered death as natural to man; and all the discourses founded upon this false principle, are so vain and superficial, that they only serve to show the weakness of human nature, since the highest efforts of the greatest men are so low and puerile.

It is not so with Jesus Christ; it is not so with the canonical books; there truth is revealed, and consolation as infallibly connected with it, as it is infallibly wanting to error. Let us consider death, then, according to the light in which the Holy Spirit has placed it. We have the inestimable advantage of knowing that death is truly and really the punishment of sin, imposed on man to expiate his crimes, and necessary for man in order to purge away his sin; that it is the only thing which can deliver the soul from the irregular bodily propensities which the saints cannot live without in this world. We know that life, especially the life of Christians, is a continual sacrifice, completed only

at death: we know that Jesus Christ on entering the world, presented and offered up himself to God as a sacrifice and real victim; that his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his session for ever at the right hand of his Father, and his presence in the Eucharist, are one unparalleled sacrifice; we know also that what happens to Jesus Christ must happen to all his members.

Let us then consider life as a sacrifice, and be convinced that the events of life should make no impression on the minds of Christians, except in proportion as they retard or promote this sacrifice.

Let us call that only evil, which makes what ought to be a sacrifice to God, a sacrifice to the devil; and call that good which renders what in Adam is a sacrifice to Satan, a sacrifice to God; and with these views let us examine the nature of death.

For this purpose it is necessary to refer to the person of Jesus Christ; for as God regards men only through the mediator Jesus Christ, so men must regard themselves and others only through the same medium.

Unless partakers of his mediation, we shall find in ourselves nothing but deadly miseries, and forbidden pleasures: but if we regard all things in Jesus Christ, we shall find whatever can impart consolation, pleasure, and improvement.

Let us, then, contemplate death in Jesus Christ, and not out of him. Without Jesus Christ it is dreadful, detestable, and a terror to our nature. In Jesus Christ, its character is totally changed:

it is lovely, holy, and the joy of the faithful. All things are delightful in Jesus Christ, even death, and for this reason he suffered and died, to sanctify death and its sufferings; as God and Man, he united all that was sublime with all that was abject, that he might consecrate to himself all things, sin excepted, and might be the model of all conditions of being.

To understand what death is, and especially what death in Jesus Christ is, we must examine what rank it holds in his perpetual and uninterrupted sacrifice, and for this purpose we may remark, that in sacrifices the principal part is the death of the victim. The presentment and consecration which precede are preparatives: but the completion is its death, in which, by the destruction of life, the creature renders to God all the homage in its power, annihilating itself before the majesty of his presence, and adoring that supreme existence which alone exists essentially. It is true, there is another part after the death of the victim; the divine acceptance of the sacrifice. This is spoken of in Scripture, when it is said, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour," Genesis viii. 21. "And God received the savour of the sacrifice." This is truly the consummation of the sacrifice, but it is rather an act of God towards the creature, than of the creature towards God; so that death may be considered as the last act of the creature.

All these things have been accomplished in Jesus Christ. On entering the world, he offered up himself. "By the eternal Spirit he offered himself to

God." Hebrews ix. 14. On coming into the world, he said, "Sacrifice and burnt offering thou wouldest not. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God! and thy law is within my heart." (Psalm xl.) Here we behold the presentation of the sacrifice. The consecration immediately followed the presentation. And the sacrifice lasted all his life, and was consummated by his death.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and have entered into glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26.) "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared: though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Hebrews v. 28.) And God raised him from the dead and received him into glory, (which was prefigured by the fire from heaven that fell upon the sacrifices,) to transform his body and make it live a life of glory. This is what Jesus Christ obtained and accomplished by his Resurrection.

Thus the Sacrifice being perfected by the death of Jesus Christ, and consummated even in his body by his Resurrection, when the image of sinful flesh was absorbed by glory, Jesus Christ performed his part in the transaction: and nothing remained but the acceptance of the sacrifice by God; that as in the ordinary sacrifices the smoke ascended, and carried the odour to the throne of God, so Jesus Christ

in that state of perfect immolation might be offered, carried up, and received at the throne of God: this was accomplished at his ascension, when he went up by his own power, and by the power of the Holy Spirit which enveloped him on all sides. He arose just as the smoke of the sacrifices, which are figures of Jesus Christ, is borne aloft by the air, which is a figure of the Holy Spirit. And the Acts of the Apostles expressly state that he was received up into heaven, in order to assure us that this holy sacrifice, after being offered on earth, was accepted and received into the presence of God.

Such has been the course of events in reference to our Sovereign Lord. Let us now consider the subject in reference to ourselves. When we enter into the church, which is the world of believers, and particularly of the elect, (into which Jesus Christ entered at the moment of his incarnation, by a privilege peculiar to the only begotten Son of God,) we are presented and consecrated. The sacrifice continues through life, and is accomplished at death, when the soul, entirely released from all vice and the love of the world, that contagion which infected it during life, completes its immolation, and is received into the bosom of God.

Let us not, then, be distressed for the death of the faithful, like the Pagans, who had no hope. We do not lose them at the moment of their death. We may more properly be said to lose them when they enter the church by baptism. From that time, they belong to God. Their life becomes devoted to God; they act in the world only for God. At

their death, they are entirely détached from sin, and at that moment are received by God, and their sacrifice is consummated and crowned. They have then fulfilled their vow; they have finished the work God gave them to do; they have accomplished that one thing for which they were created. The will of God is accomplished in them, and their will is absorbed in God. Let our will, then, never separate that which God has joined; let us stifle or moderate, by the knowledge of the truth, the sentiments of corrupt and fallen nature, which are only images of falsehood, and by their illusions violate those holy sentiments which the Gospel requires us to entertain.

Let us consider death no longer as Pagans, but as Christians; that is, with hope; as St. Paul enjoins; for this is our special privilege. Let us not look upon the body, according to the depraved suggestions of nature, as a corruptible corpse; but, agreeably to the Scriptures, as the inviolable temple of the Holy Spirit.

We know that the Holy Spirit dwells in the bodies of the saints till the Resurrection; an event, to produce which, is in fact one main purpose of his indwelling. Such was the opinion of the Fathers. For this reason, we honour the relics of the dead; and on this sound principle, they used to place the Eucharist in the mouths of the dead: for, as they were known to be the temples of the Holy Spirit, it was believed that they deserved to unite in this Holy Sacrament.

But the church has changed this custom; not

because it believes that these bodies are not holy, but because the Eucharist, being the bread of life, and of the living, it judges that it ought not to be given to the dead.

Let us no longer look upon the faithful who die in the Lord as having ceased to live, though nature prompts us to think so; but as commencing to live, as the truth assures us. Let us no longer look upon their souls as perished and annihilated, but as vivified, and united to a living Sovereign. And let us, by admitting these truths, extirpate the erroneous sentiments that are so deeply rooted in our minds, and quell those emotions of dread so natural to man.

III. God created man with a love of two kinds, namely, the love of God, and the love of himself; but so adjusted, that the love of God was unlimited, that is, it had no object but God; the other was limited, and to be exercised in subordination to God.

Man, in this state, not only loved himself without sin, but he could not have refrained from loving himself, without committing sin.

But on the entrance of sin, man lost the love of God; and the love of himself being left in a soul capable of love for an infinite object, self-love expanded, and dispersed itself abroad in the void left by the love of God; and thus man loves himself alone, and all things for himself, that is, he loves himself infinitely.

Such is the origin of self-love. It was natural

to Adam, and just in his state of innocence; but since the fall, it has become criminal and excessive. Such is the source of this love, and the cause of its degeneracy and excess.

It is the same with the desire of power, with sloth, and other vices. And we may easily apply the subject to the natural dread of death. This dread was natural and just in Adam, before the fall, because his life being perfectly pleasing to God, it must have been also pleasing to himself; and death was to be dreaded, as putting an end to a life conformed to the will of God; but since man has sinned, his life has become corrupt, his body and soul are enemies to one another, and both are enemies to God.

This catastrophe has destroyed the holiness of life, but the love of life still remains; and the dread of death continuing the same, that which was just in Adam, is unjust in us.

We see here the origin of the dread of death, and the cause of its depravation. Let us clear up the errors of nature, by the light of Faith.—The dread of death is natural: it was so in a state of innocence, because by entering paradise, death would have terminated a life of perfect purity. It might justly be hated, when it could not take place without separating a holy soul from a holy body; but it is right to love it, when it separates a holy soul from an impure body. It was right to shun it, when it violated the peace between the soul and the body; but not when it puts an end to their irreconcilable dissension. Lastly, when it would have afflicted

an innocent body, and deprived it of the liberty of serving God; when it would have separated from the soul a body entirely co-operative with its volitions; when it would have destroyed all the happiness man was capable of in this world, it was just to abhor it: but when it terminates an impure life, when it takes from the body the capability of sinning, when it delivers the soul from a powerful rebel that counteracts all the means of its salvation, it is very wrong to retain the same feelings respecting it.

Let us not, then, relinquish the natural love of life, for it is the gift of God; but let it be for the same life for which God implanted it, and not for a contrary object; and while we approve of the love which Adam had for his life of innocence, and which Jesus Christ had for his own, let us persuade ourselves to hate a life contrary to that which Jesus Christ loved, and to fear such a death as Jesus Christ feared, which happened in a body well-pleasing to God; but let us not fear a death which, in punishing a criminal body, and purifying a vicious soul, should excite a directly contrary sentiment, if we have ever so little faith, hope, and charity.

It is one of the fundamental principles of Christianity, that every thing which Jesus Christ passed through, must take place in the body and soul of every Christian;—that, as Jesus Christ suffered during his mortal life, rose again to a new life, and ascended to Heaven, where he is seated at the right hand of his Father; so the soul and body of every

believer must suffer, die, rise again, and ascend to heaven.

All these events are accomplished in the soul during this life, but not in the body. The soul suffers and dies to sin in repentance and baptism; and in these sacraments, it rises to a new life; and, lastly, it quits earth, and rises to heaven, by leading a heavenly life. "Our conversation is in heaven," as St. Paul says, Philippians iii. 20.

None of these events happen to the body in this life, but they take place afterwards; for at death, the body dies to this mortal life; at judgment, it rises to a new life; and after judgment, it rises to heaven, and abides there for ever. Thus the same things happen to the body and to the soul, but at different times; and the changes of the body occur when those of the soul are accomplished; that is, after death—so that death crowns the happiness of the soul, and commences the happiness of the body.

Such is the admirable procedure of divine wisdom for the salvation of men; and, as Saint Augustine observes, God has made these arrangements, lest if the body died and rose again for ever at baptism, men would be induced to enter upon the obedience of the Gospel only by the love of life; instead of which, the grandeur of the Christian faith, is rendered more illustrious, by its leading us to immortality through the shades of death.

IV. It is not right that we should be totally insensible, and feel no sorrow under affliction and the disastrous events of life, as if we were angels, who

are incapable of being affected by them; nor is it right that we should be inconsolable like the Pagans, who knew not the grace of the Gospel; but it is right that we should feel sorrow and be consoled like Christians, and that the consolations of grace should rise superior to the feelings of nature; so that grace may not only be in us, but be victorious in us; that thus by hallowing our Father's name, his will may become ours; his grace may reign and rule over nature; our afflictions may be, as it were, the materials of a sacrifice, which grace perfects and consumes for the glory of God; and these particular sacrifices may celebrate and anticipate the universal sacrifice of nature, which will be consummated by the power of Jesus Christ.

Thus we may gain advantage from our imperfections, by making use of them as materials for this burnt-offering; for it is the aim of true Christians to profit by their own imperfections, since all things work together for good to the elect.

And if we examine the subject still closer, we shall find it tend greatly to our improvement, to contemplate the undisguised and simple truth.—Since it is true, that the death of the body is only an image of that of the soul, and we assume that we have reason to hope for the salvation of those whose death we lament; certainly, if we cannot stop the current of our sorrow and distress, we should be taught this lesson, that, since the death of the body is so terrible, and so deeply affects us, the death of the soul should fill us with far deeper anguish. God has suffered the first to pass on those whom we de-

plore; but we hope that he has preserved them from the second.

Let, then, the magnitude of our afflictions prompt us to reflect on the magnitude of our blessings; and let the poignancy of our grief serve as the measure of our joy.

There is nothing, indeed, to restrain our joy, unless a fear that their souls should languish for some time in the pains which are appointed to purge away the remaining sins of this life. And we ought to use our utmost efforts to appease the wrath of God against them.

Prayer and masses form a sovereign remedy for their pains. But one of the most solid and useful charities to the dead, is, to do what they would have enjoined us had they been still alive, and to put ourselves in the state in which they, at the present time, would wish us to be. By acting thus, we shall, in some sense, make them live again, since their councils will be living and acting within us; and as heresiarchs are punished in another life for the sins into which they have led their followers, in whom the poison of their doctrine still lives, so the dead are rewarded, in addition to their own merit, for that to which they have given occasion, by their counsels and example.

V. Man is surely too feeble to judge correctly of the train of future events. Let us hope, therefore, in God, and not weary ourselves by unwise and rash anticipations. Let us commit to God the conduct of life, nor suffer ourselves to be the prey of anxieties.

According to Saint Augustine, there is in every man, a serpent, an Eve, and an Adam: the senses and the natural affections, are the serpent; concupiscence is the Eve; and the reason is the Adam.

Nature tempts us continually; concupiscence is ever active; but sin is not complete, till the reason consents.

Let this serpent, and this Eve do their utmost, if we cannot prevent them; but let us pray that the grace of God may so strengthen our Adam, that he may come off victorious, that Jesus Christ may be the conqueror, and reign eternally within us.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PRAYER FOR THE RIGHT USE OF SICKNESS.

O LORD, whose Spirit is ever most good and gracious, who art so merciful, that not only the temporal enjoyments, but the afflictions also, of thine elect, are the effects of thy mercy; grant me grace not to act as a Pagan in the state to which thy justice has reduced me; but, as a true Christian, may I acknowledge thee for my Father and my God, in whatever state I find myself, since a change in my condition causes none in thine: thou art always the same, though I am perpetually liable to change; thou art not less God, when thou afflictest and punishest, than when thou consolest and withholdest the rod of correction.

II. Thou gavest me health wherewith to serve thee; but I applied it to uses altogether foreign. Thou hast now sent sickness to correct me; suffer me not, by my impatience under it, to excite thine anger. I made an ill use of health, and thou hast justly chastised me. Suffer me not to make an ill use of thy chastisement. And since the corruption of my nature is such, that it renders thy very favours pernicious, grant, O my God, that thy all-powerful grace may render thy chastisement salutary! If my heart was full of the love of the world while it retained its vigour, O destroy that vigour

for my salvation, and make me, either through weakness of body, or by the energy of charity, incapable of enjoying this world, that I may find enjoyment in thee alone!

III. O God, to whom I must render an exact account of all my actions at the end of life, and at the last judgment; who preservest the world, and all that is in the world, either to try thy chosen, or to punish sinners; who leavest hardened sinners to their criminal enjoyments; who causest our bodies to die, and at the hour of death separatest our souls from all they loved in this world; who wilt snatch me in those last moments of my life from all the things to which I have been attached and have given my heart; who wilt consume, at the last day, the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, to show to all men that nothing exists essentially but thyself, and that nothing besides is worthy their love, since nothing is durable but thyself; O God, who wilt destroy all their vain idols, and miserable objects of desire, thee will I praise, and bless all the days of my life, that for my good thou hast anticipated that awful day, by virtually destroying all things as far as I am concerned, by that debility to which thou hast reduced me. I praise thee, my God, and will bless thee all my days, that thou hast been pleased to incapacitate me for enjoying the delights of health, and the pleasures of the world; and that thou hast, in effect, annihilated, for my good, those deceitful idols which thou wilt literally annihilate, for the confusion of the wicked, in the

day of thy wrath. Cause me to judge myself, O Lord, on the destruction thou hast made with respect to myself, that thou thyself mayest not judge me on the destruction of my life, and of the world. For, O Lord, at the instant of death, I shall find myself separated from the world, stript of all things, and alone in thy presence, to answer to thy justice for all the movements of my heart; grant, that in this present sickness, I may consider myself in a kind of death, separated from the world, stript of all the objects of my attachment, and alone in thy presence, to implore of thy mercy the conversion of my heart; and that thus, I may have the solid consolation, that thou hast now sent the image of death in order to exercise thy mercy, before thou actually sendest death to execute thy justice! Grant, O my God, that as thou hast anticipated my death, I may anticipate the rigour of thy sentence, and that I may examine myself previous to thy judgment, that I may find mercy in thy presence!

IV. Grant, O my God, that I may adore the disposal of thy providence in reference to the conduct of my life; that even thy rod of correction may comfort me; and that having lived in the bitterness of sin while at ease, I may taste the celestial sweetness of thy grace, amid those salutary pains with which thou art now afflicting me. But I acknowledge, O my God, that my heart is so hardened, so full of the notions, the cares, the anxieties, the attachments of this world, that not sickness any more than health, nor conversation, nor books, nor

thy holy word, nor thy Gospel, nor thy most holy mysteries, nor alms, nor fastings, nor mortifications, nor miracles, nor the sacraments, nor the sacrifice of thy body, nor all my efforts, nor those of all mankind, can avail any thing, even so much as to commence my conversion, if thou dost not accompany all these things by the extraordinary aids of thy grace. And therefore, my God, I address myself to thee the Almighty, to request a favour that the whole creation cannot grant. I should not have the boldness to address my cries to thee, if any other being could answer them. But as the conversion of my heart is a work surpassing all the efforts of nature, I can address myself only to the Author and Almighty master of nature and of my heart. To whom shall I cry, O Lord, to whom shall I apply, unless to thee? Every thing which is not God cannot satisfy my longing. God himself is the being I ask for and seek, and to thee alone, O God, can I apply to obtain thyself. Open my heart, O Lord; enter that rebellious place which the vices have occupied. They hold it in subjection. Enter there, as into the house of the strong man armed; first bind that strong and sturdy foe who possesses it, and then take the treasure it contains. Take, O Lord, those affections which the world has seized upon; seize thou that treasure, or rather retake it, for to thee it belongs; it is a tribute due to thee, since thy image is stamped upon it. That image thou didst impress at the moment of my baptism, which was my second birth, but it is wholly effaced. The image of the world is now so

strongly marked upon it, that thine is no longer visible. Thou alone couldst create my soul; thou alone canst create it anew; thou alone couldst form thy image there: thou alone canst reform it and reimpress thy effaced likeness, even Jesus Christ my Saviour, thy image, and the expression of thy essence.

V. O my God, how happy the heart which loves so glorious an object as thyself; how honourable and how salutary is such an attachment! I perceive that I cannot love the world without displeasing thee, without injuring and dishonouring myself, yet for all this the world is still the object of my delight. O my God, how happy is the soul whose delight thou art, since it may surrender itself to such an exercise of its affections not only without scruple, but even with self-approbation. How firm and durable is its happiness, since its chief desire can never be frustrated, for thou wilt never be destroyed, and neither life nor death will ever separate it from the object of its attachment. The same moment which will involve the wicked with their idols in one common ruin, will unite the just with thee in one common glory; and as the one will perish with the perishable objects to which they have attached themselves, the others will exist for ever in that eternal and self-existent object with which they will be most intimately united. O how happy those who, with perfect liberty and with the invincible determination of their will, love perfectly

and freely the object they are under the greatest obligations to love!

VI. Perfect, O my God, the good tendencies thou hast imparted. Be thou the end as thou art the beginning. Crown thy own gifts, for I acknowledge that they are thy gifts. Yes, and far from pretending that my prayers have such merit as to lay thee under an obligation of granting what I desire, I most humbly acknowledge, that having given to creatures, that heart which thou hadst formed for thyself and not for the world or myself, I can expect no favour but from thy mercy, since I have nothing in myself to attract thy regard, and all the natural movements of my heart having been directed towards creatures or myself, could only excite thy displeasure. I render thee thanks, O my God, for the good tendencies thou hast imparted, even for that which prompts me to thank thee for the rest.

VII. Touch my heart with repentance for my faults, since, without this internal sorrow, the external evils with which thou afflictest my body will only be a new occasion of sin. Make me fully sensible that the evils which affect the body are only the punishment and type of the evils of the soul. Grant, O Lord, that in one way they may also be the remedy, by making me reflect amidst my bodily infirmity, of which I am so sensible, on that still greater infirmity of the soul, to which I am insensible, though it is altogether sick and full of sores.

For, O Lord, the greatest of its maladies is that insensibility and extreme weakness which deprive it of all sense of its real miseries. Cause me to feel them most sensibly, and may the remainder of my life be one continued act of repentance.

VIII. O Lord, although my past life has been free from flagrant crimes, the opportunities for committing which thou hast kept far from me, it has nevertheless been most hateful, by its continual negligence, by the bad use it has made of thy holy sacraments, by its contempt of thy word and of thy inspirations, by its sloth and the total uselessness of my thoughts and actions, by the entire waste of the time thou gavest me to be spent only in thy service, in order to seek thy pleasure in all my employments, and to repent of those daily sins which are common even to the most upright persons,—so that their life ought to be a continual repentance, and, without it, they are in danger of falling from their state of justification: thus, O my God, have I always rebelled against thee.

IX. Yes, O Lord, hitherto I have always been deaf to thy inspirations; I have slighted thy oracles; I have judged contrary to thy decisions; I have contradicted the holy maxims which thou didst bring into the world from the bosom of thy eternal Father, and by which thou wilt judge the world. Thou hast said, "Happy those who mourn;" and "Wo to those who are comforted." I have said, Happy they who enjoy a large fortune, a splendid reputa-

tion, and unbroken health! And why did I esteem them happy, unless that all these advantages furnished them with ample means of indulging in the creatures, that is, of offending thee? Yes, O Lord, I confess that I have esteemed health a blessing, not because it was the ready means of serving thee with advantage, of accomplishing services for thee, and of benefiting my fellow-men, but because by its aid I could surrender myself with less reserve to the abundance of earthly delights, and enjoy with more exquisite gust its fatal pleasures. Grant me grace, O Lord, to renew my corrupted reason, and to conform my sentiments to thine! How happy shall I esteem myself in affliction, if, while I am incapable of external activity, thou so purifiest my principles, that they will no longer be opposed to thine; and if thus I shall find thee within me, now that through weakness I can no longer seek thee without! For, O Lord, thy kingdom is within the faithful, and I shall find it in myself, if there I find thy Spirit and thy dictates.

X. But, O Lord, what can I do to induce thee to pour out thy Spirit on this miserable world? All that I am, is hateful to thee; I find nothing in myself that can be pleasing to thee. I see nothing there, O Lord, of this kind, except my pains, which bear some resemblance to thine. Consider, then, the evils which I suffer, and those which menace me. Look with an eye of pity on the wounds which thy own hand hath inflicted. O my Saviour, who didst love thy sufferings even in death;

O God, who becamest man, in order to suffer more than any man for the salvation of men; who becamest incarnate when man had sinned, and assumedst a body, to suffer all the evils our sins deserved; who so lovest bodies in suffering, that thou didst choose a body oppressed beyond any other by suffering; O God, show kindness to my body, not for itself, nor for any thing it contains, for all deserves thy wrath, but for the pains it suffers, which alone are worthy of thy love. Love my sufferings, O Lord, and let my pains induce thee to visit me. But, that the preparation for taking up thy abode with me may be complete, grant, O my Saviour, that if my body has this in common with thine, that it suffers for my sins, may my soul have this in common with thine, to be filled with sadness for the same offences; that thus I may suffer with thee and like thee, both in my body and my soul, for the sins I have committed.

XI. Be pleased, O Lord, to unite thy consolations to my sufferings, that I may suffer as a Christian. I do not ask to be exempt from pain, for that is the recompense of glorified saints; but I do ask, not to be abandoned to the pains of nature without the consolations of thy Spirit, for that is the curse of Jews and Pagans. I do not ask for a fulness of consolation without any suffering, for that is the life of glory. I do not ask for a fulness of affliction without consolation, for that is the state of Judaism. But I do ask, O Lord, to feel, at the same time, the pains of nature for my sins, and the consolations of

thy Spirit for thy mercy's sake; for that is the true state of Christianity. Let me not feel pain without consolation; but let me feel pain and consolation at the same time, that I may at last enjoy thy consolations without pain. For, O Lord, thou didst allow the world to languish in natural suffering, without consolation, before the coming of thy only begotten Son; now thou consolest and soothest thy saints, under their sufferings, by his grace, and thou crownest thy saints with pure bliss in his glorification. These are the wonderful steps by which thou accomplishest thy designs; thou hast led me through the first, bring me through the second, that I may arrive at the third: this, O Lord, is the favour I implore.

XII. Suffer me not to be at such a distance from thee, that it shall be possible for me to meditate on thy soul being sorrowful even unto death, and on thy body chastened by death for mine iniquities, without rejoicing in my own sufferings, whether of body or mind. For is there any thing more shameful, though so common to all Christians, and to myself, than that, whilst thou didst sweat blood for the expiation of our offences, we are content to live in pleasure; and that Christians, who have professed to belong to thee; that they who, by baptism, have renounced the world to follow thee; that they who, in the presence of the Church, have taken a solemn oath to live and die with thee; that they who have professed to believe that the world persecuted and crucified thee; that they who believe thou wast exposed to the wrath of God, and to the cruelty of

men, to redeem them from their transgressions; that they, I say, who believe all these truths; who look upon the body as the victim offered for their salvation; who look upon the pleasures and sins of the world to be the only cause of thy sufferings, and the world itself as the inflictor of them, should seek to pamper their bodies by these pleasures, and this very world; and that they who would not, without being horror-struck, behold a man caress and cherish the murderer of his father, who had devoted his life for him, can live, as I have done, in the full enjoyment of the world, which I know to have been the murderer of him whom I acknowledge for my Father and my God, and who gave himself for my salvation, and bore, in his own person, the punishment of my iniquities! It is just, O Lord, that thou shouldest disturb a joy so criminal as this, in which I should otherwise have reposed till the shades of death came upon me.

XIII. Remove, O Lord, that sadness which, owing to my self-love, is produced by my sufferings, and by those worldly objects which will not be reconciled to the inclinations of my heart, and regard not thy glory; but infuse a sadness conformable to thy own. Let my sufferings serve to appease thy wrath. Make them the occasion of my conversion and salvation. Henceforth let me not wish for health and life, but to employ it and end it for thee, in thee, and with thee.

I ask of thee neither health nor sickness, neither life nor death; but that thou wouldest dispose of

my health and sickness, of my life and death, for thy glory, for my salvation, and for the advantage of the church and of thy saints, of whom I hope, by thy grace, to form a part. Thou alone knowest what is needful for me; thou art my Sovereign Master; do with me as seems good in thy sight. Either give or take away; but, at all events, conform my will to thine, so that, in humble and unreserved submission, and in holy confidence, I may prepare myself to receive the allotments of thy eternal Providence, and receive with equal gratitude whatever comes from thee.

XIV. Grant, O my God, that I may meet events of every kind with a uniform evenness of soul; since we know not what we ought to ask for, and I cannot wish for one thing in preference to another, without presumption, and without rendering myself a judge of the future, and responsible for trains of events which thy wisdom has concealed from me. O Lord, I know that I know but one thing; that it is good to follow thee, and evil to offend thee: saving this, I know not what is for the better or the worse of all things under the sun. I know not which will be most for my advantage, health or sickness, riches or poverty, nor any other worldly object. To discern this surpasses the ability of men and angels, and is concealed in the abyss of the Providence I adore, but do not even wish to fathom.

XV. Grant then, O Lord, that whatever I may be, I may conform myself to thy will; and that, dis-

eased as I am, I may glorify thee in my sufferings. Without them I cannot arrive at glory; and thou, O my Saviour, didst choose to arrive there thyself by the same means. By the marks of thy sufferings thou wast recognized by thy disciples, and by their sufferings thou also wilt recognize thy disciples. Recognize me then for thy disciple, in the evils I endure both in body and soul for the offences I have committed; and since nothing is acceptable to God unless offered by thee, unite my will to thine, and my sorrows to those which thou didst endure. Cause mine to become thine; unite me to thyself, fill me with thyself, and with thy holy Spirit. Enter my heart and soul; there bear my sufferings, and endure in me what remains to be accomplished of thy passion, which thou endurest in thy members until the perfect consummation of thy body, to the end that, being full of thee, it may be no longer I who live and suffer, but thyself, O my Saviour, living and suffering within me; and thus, having had some small share in thy sufferings, thou mayest fill me entirely with the glory thou wilt gain by them, and in which thou livest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, through eternal ages. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF ANCIENT AND MODERN CHRISTIANS.

At the first formation of the Christian Church, all Christians were perfectly instructed in the points necessary to salvation. Instead of this, at the present day, the general ignorance is so great, as must deeply grieve all who have the welfare of the church at heart. Persons were formerly admitted into the church only after laborious preparation, and long-cherished desires; now they find themselves in it without trouble, care, or labour. Formerly they were admitted after a very strict examination; now they are received before they are capable of being examined. Formerly they were not received till after they had abjured their past life, and had renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil; now they enter while they are incapable of any such acts. In former times, it was necessary to come out of the world, in order to be received into the church; now men enter into the church at the same time as they enter into the world. Formerly, by assuming the Christian profession, an essential distinction was recognized between the church and the world; they were considered as two opposites, as two irreconcilable antagonists, one of which would assail the other without intermission, but of which the feeblest in appearance was destined to triumph one day over the

strongest. Such being the state of the two contending parties, men renounced the one, to join the other; they abandoned the maxims of the one, to adopt those of the other; they divested themselves of the sentiments peculiar to the one, to assume those of the other; in fine, they quitted, they renounced, they abjured the world, the scene of their first birth, to devote themselves wholly to the church, in which their second birth had taken place, and thus the mighty difference between them was most clearly discerned. Nowadays, men find themselves in the one, almost at the same time as they come into the other; the very moment of our birth into the world is that of our second birth in the church; so that, as reason expands, it makes no distinction between these opposite worlds; it is educated and formed in both at the same time. People take the sacrament, and indulge in the gaieties of life; the essential distinction, formerly so palpable, is done away; the church and the world are so confounded and mingled as to render it impossible to distinguish them.

Hence it was, that formerly, among Christians, none were seen but well-instructed persons; whereas now they are in a state of frightful ignorance. Hence those who, in former times, became Christians by baptism, and who quitted the vices of the world to practise the devotions of the church, very rarely apostatized; now nothing is more common than to see the vices of the world in the midst of Christians. The church of the saints is defiled by the admixture of the wicked; and her children, whom she has conceived and carried from infancy,

are the same who bring into her very heart, that is to say, to the participation of her most awful mysteries, her greatest enemies, the spirit of the world, the spirit of ambition, the spirit of revenge, the spirit of impurity, the spirit of concupiscence; and the love she has for her children obliges her to introduce into her vitals her most cruel foes. But it is not to the church that we must impute the calamities that have followed so disastrous a change: for as she saw that the delay of baptism would leave a great number of children under Adam's curse, she wished to deliver them from perdition, by hastening the succour she gave them; and this kind mother beheld, with extreme regret, that what she procured for the salvation of her infants, became an occasion of the destruction of the adults.

The real intention of the church is, that those whom she withdraws at so tender an age from the corruption of the world, should stand aloof as far as possible from the sentiments of the world. She anticipates the use of reason in order to anticipate the vices into which corrupted reason would seduce them; and before their spirits can act she fills them with her own spirit, that they may live in ignorance of the world, and in a state so far removed from vice as that they should never know it. This appears from the ceremonies of Baptism; for she does not grant Baptism to infants till they have declared by the mouth of their sponsors that they desire it, that they renounce the world and Satan; and as she wishes them to preserve these dispositions unaltered through life, she commands them expressly to guard them

inviolably; and enjoins upon the sponsors, as an indispensable duty, the instruction of the children in all these points; for she does not wish that those who in the present day are nourished in her own bosom, should be less instructed and less informed than those whom she formerly admitted to the number of her sons; she does not wish for less perfection in those whom she nourishes, than in those whom she has already received. Nevertheless, this sacrament is perverted so widely from the intention of the church, that we cannot think of the fact without horror. Men never reflect on this great benefit, because they have never personally asked for it, because they never remember having received it. But as the Church evidently demands not less zeal in those who have been brought up the servants of the faith, than in those who aspire to that privilege, it is necessary to set before their eyes the example of the catechumens of antiquity; to contemplate their ardour, their devotion, their dread of the world, and generous renouncement of it; and if they were not thought worthy to receive baptism without these dispositions, persons who do not find themselves so disposed ought to submit to receive the instruction they would have had, if they were for the first time about to enter into the communion of the church; and ought to submit to a repentance which they should feel no disposition to reject, and have less aversion for austerity and the mortification of the senses, than they can find charms in the indulgence of the false pleasures of sin.

That they may be disposed to receive instruction,

they must learn the different customs practised in the church at different periods. At the commencement of the church, they taught the catechumens, that is, those who desired baptism before the rite was conferred; and never admitted them to it till after full instruction in the mysteries of religion, repentance for their past life, an intimate acquaintance with the grandeur and excellence of a profession of the faith and the Christian doctrines, nor till after the most convincing marks of true conversion, and an extreme desire for Baptism. These things being known to the whole Church, the sacrament of incorporation, by which they became members of the church, was conferred upon them. In the present day, Baptism having, for very important considerations, been granted to infants before the use of reason, the negligence of their relations allows these Christians to grow old without any knowledge of our religion.

When instruction preceded Baptism, all were instructed; but now baptism preceding instruction, that instruction which before was necessary in order to receive the sacrament, is become optional: it is consequently neglected, and almost abolished. Reason teaches the necessity of instruction, so that when instruction preceded baptism, the necessity of the one naturally led to the practice of the other: but now, baptism preceding instruction, as men are made Christians without instruction, they believe they may remain Christians without it. Whilst the first Christians testified their warmest gratitude for a favour which the Church granted only to their long continued entreaties, Christians in our day manifest

ingratitude for the same favour which she grants before they are of an age capable of asking for it. If she abhorred so thoroughly the falls of the first Christians, although so infrequent, how must she abominate the falls, and continual relapses of modern Christians, who are far more deeply indebted to her, since she has delivered them so much more fully and freely from the condemnation in which they were involved, by their first birth!

She cannot without sighing behold them abuse the greatest of her gifts, and that what she has done to insure their salvation, should become almost the certain occasion of their being lost; for she has not changed her disposition, though she has altered her customs.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON CONVERSION.

I. The first result of divine influence in the mind of a man, on whom God condescends to operate with effect, is a totally new view and perception of himself, and of all other objects. This extraordinary illumination produces fear and anxiety, and disturbs the repose he found in the former objects of his delight: he can no longer enjoy them with tranquillity. A continual scrupulosity mingles itself with his pleasures, and the view he now has of himself will not allow him to taste the accustomed sweetness of things to which he formerly surrendered his heart without control. And he feels still greater disgust in the exercises of religion, than in the vanities of the world. On the one hand, the vanity of visible objects affects him more than the hope of invisible realities, and, on the other, the worth of invisible objects affects him more than the vanity of visible things. Thus, the presence of the one, and the absence of the other, both contribute to his dissatisfaction, and produce a disorder and confusion in his mind, which he is unable to allay, since it is the result of a long train of former feelings, combined with the new impressions he now experiences. Perishable things appear to him as perishing, or rather as already destroyed; and in the certain prospect of the annihilation of every thing he

loves, he is filled with dismay. Every moment lessens the terms of his enjoyments; every moment is withdrawing from him what he esteems most dear; and at last a day will come, which will strip him of every thing on which he places his dependance. He perceives most clearly that, as his heart is attached only to frail and fleeting objects, it must, at the close of life, find itself solitary and forsaken, especially since he has taken no pains to form an alliance with a real self-subsistent good, by which his soul might be supported during this life and beyond it.

He then begins to reckon as nothing every thing, which must, sooner or later, be reduced to nothing. The heavens and the earth, relations, friends, enemies, poverty, riches, honour, disgrace, obscurity, power, his own body, health, sickness, and even life, in fact, every thing less durable than itself is incapable of satisfying the desires of a soul that is seriously intent upon obtaining a happiness commensurate with its own existence.

The man I am describing is astonished at the blindness in which he has been so long involved; and when he considers the length of time he has lived without making these reflections, and the number of persons who still live in that state, and how incontestable a fact it is that the soul being immortal cannot find its felicity among perishable objects, of which at farthest it will be deprived at death, he is filled with holy shame and astonishment, which is salutary, though painful. He reflects, that however great the number of those persons may be, who grow old in the maxims of the world, and

whatever authority belongs to this multitude of examples of those who seek their happiness from the world, it is nevertheless certain, that, supposing some worldly objects could give solid pleasure, (which is shown to be false by an infinite number of melancholy instances,) the loss of these things is inevitable when death comes; so that, whatever treasures of temporal good a man may have acquired, whether wealth, or knowledge, or fame, by an absolute necessity he will be deprived of all these sources of felicity. If they were able to afford him some satisfaction, they could not furnish it to perpetuity; if he could obtain by their means true happiness, it would not be durable, since it is bounded by the limits of the present life.

By such a process of holy humiliation which God raises above the former pride of the soul, the soul begins to rise above the generality of mankind. It condemns their conduct, detests their maxims, and deplores their blindness. It applies itself to the pursuit of real good, which it perceives must possess these two qualities; namely, duration equal to its own, and supreme loveliness.

While the soul remained unenlightened, it found in the world the last of these two qualities, for it perceived nothing so lovely; but, as the first was wanting, the world could not be the supreme good. It seeks, therefore, elsewhere for it; and as the pure light of heaven shows that such a prize is not in the soul itself, nor in the objects around it, it begins to seek for it in objects above itself. In an elevation so transcendent, it finds nothing to satisfy

its desires, or arrest its course, even in heaven itself, among angels, or the most perfect of created intelligences. It passes through the whole creation, and can find nothing to detain it till it reaches the throne of God: there it begins to find repose, since there it finds a good of incomparable loveliness, and which it cannot be deprived of but by its own consent.

At this stage of conversion, the individual has not tasted the pleasures with which God rewards a continued course of piety; but he plainly sees that creatures cannot be more lovely than the Creator; and his reason, aided by the illuminations of grace, convinces him that no being can be so lovely as God, and that he can be taken away only from those who reject him, since to possess him it is only necessary to desire him, and to refuse is to lose him. Thus he rejoices in having discovered a good which cannot be torn from him as long as he desires to possess it, and which is superior to every thing else.

Amidst these new reflections, he has a view of the grandeur of the Creator, and is filled with humility and profound adoration. He annihilates himself in the divine presence, and, unable to form an idea of himself sufficiently low, or to entertain conceptions sufficiently elevated of the supreme good, he makes fresh efforts to abase himself to the lowest depths of nothingness, by contemplating God in all his vastness and infinity. Exhausted in these attempts, he adores in silence, looks upon himself as a vile and worthless creature; by repeated acts of homage adores and praises his Maker, and longs to adore and praise him for ever.

He acknowledges the grace of God, in revealing his infinite Majesty to so vile a worm; he is confounded and abashed, for having preferred so many vanities to this Divine Master; and, in the spirit of compunction and penitence, implores him in pity to stay that wrath which, combined as it is with infinite greatness, appears so terrible. He offers up earnest prayers to God, that, since he has been pleased so far to discover himself, he would conduct him to himself, and teach him the way. For it is to God he aspires; but he wishes to approach him only by the method he has pointed out; he desires that God himself may be his way, as well as his ultimate end. He also sees that he must act conformably to the new light he has received.

He begins to know God, and desires to draw near to him; but, as he is ignorant of the way, he acts, provided his desires are real and sincere, as a person who, having lost his road, and being aware of his mistake, has recourse to others who know the road; he consults those who are able to instruct him in the way that leads to the God whom he has so long forsaken. In seeking to know the truth, he resolves to conform himself to it, as far as he knows it, during the remainder of his life; and, as the weakness of his nature, combined with the habits of sin in which he has lived, has reduced him to an incapacity for arriving at the happiness he longs for, he seeks from the mercy of God the means of obtaining it, and of forming with it an indissoluble union. His soul, absorbed in the contemplation of beauty so old, and yet to itself so new, perceives that all its

movements must be directed towards this object. He is convinced that while here below, he has to adore God as it becomes a creature, to render thanks to him as his due, to appease him as guilty, to pray to him as needy, until his only employment will be, to behold, to love, and to praise him to all eternity.

II.* The graces which God produces in this life, are the measure of the glory he prepares in the other. So that when I foresee the end and confirmation of his work in its beginnings, as they appear in persons of piety, I am struck with a feeling of veneration, that commands my respect for those whom he seems to have chosen for his elect. Methinks I see them already on the thrones, where those who "have quitted all" will judge the world with Jesus Christ, according to his promise. But when I have reflected that it is possible, on the other hand, for these persons to fall, and to be among the unhappy number of the judged, and that there will be many who will fall from their glory, and by their negligence will leave to others to take that crown which God offered them; I cannot endure the thought: and the horror I have of beholding them in this eternal state of misery, after having imagined them, with so much reason, in another state, causes me to turn away from the contemplation, and have recourse to God, to pray that he would not abandon the feeble beings

* This, and the following paragraph, are fragments of two letters contained in the third volume of Pascal's Works, (Paris, 1819,) pp. 611—615.

whom he has "apprehended," and to say with St. Paul, "O Lord finish thyself the work which thou hast begun!" Saint Paul often considered himself in these two states, which made him say, as he does in another passage, "I chasten my body, and keep in subjection, lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

III. We make an ill use, so at least it seems to me, of the opportunity God grants us of suffering for the establishment of his truth. For when we are exposed to danger, on account of truth discovered by ourselves, we act in a manner totally different. But we seem not to know that the same providence which grants illumination to some, denies it to others; and in our toilsome efforts to persuade them, we appear to serve another God than the Being who permits the obstacles which retard their progress. We believe we are performing service to God, by murmuring against these difficulties; as if it was one power who implanted religion in our own hearts, and another who infused vigour into those who oppose it.

Such conduct is the result of self-will. When we desire, from motives that originate in ourselves, that any project should succeed, we are irritated with the obstacles, because we perceive that the motives which make us act are wanting in them, and find they contain something which is independent of the will that causes us to act.

But when we are influenced by God to act, we perceive nothing without us which does not come

from the same principle that makes us act; there is no opposition in that to the moving power in our own minds. The same mover who causes us to act, causes others to resist us: at least he permits it; so that as we find no difference in it, and it is not our minds which combat these external events, but the same spirit which produces the good and permits the evil, this uniformity should not disturb the peace of the soul; and it is one of the best marks that we are acted upon by the Spirit of God, since it is much more certain that God permits the evil, however great it may be, than that God produces the good within us (and not some other secret motive) however great it may appear to us.—Thus, to be assured that it is God who causes us to act, we must judge by our mode of meeting external things, as well as by our inward motives: for if we examine only what passes within, although we find nothing but good, we cannot be certain that this really comes from God; but when we examine ourselves as to our external relations, that is, when we consider whether we bear external hinderances with patience, this indicates that there is a uniformity of spirit between the mover who influences our desires, and him who permits the resistance to our desires; and as there can be no doubt that it is God who permits the one, we may humbly hope that it is God who produces the others.

But, strange to say, we act as if commissioned to ensure the triumph of truth, instead of being only appointed to fight for it. The desire of conquering is so natural, that when it is concealed un-

der a desire for the triumph of truth, the one may often be mistaken for the other, and we may fancy we are seeking the glory of God, when in fact we are seeking only our own.

It appears to me, that the manner in which we bear with difficulties, is the surest mark. For if we only wish that the will of God be done, no doubt we shall wish as much for the triumph of his justice as of his mercy; and when it is not owing to our negligence, we shall be equally satisfied whether the truth be received or opposed; since in the one case, the mercy of God triumphs, and in the other, his justice. "Holy Father, the world hath not known thee." Saint Augustine remarks, that it is an effect of God's Justice, that he is not known to the world. Let us pray, and labour, and rejoice without ceasing, as St. Paul says.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF AUTHORITY IN PHILOSOPHY.

In the present day, reverence for antiquity is carried so far, in matters that ought least to feel its influence, that all its notions are regarded as oracles, and its very obscurities as sacred mysteries; so that we cannot advance any new opinions without danger, and the text of an ancient author is sufficient to put down the most powerful arguments. My intention is not to correct one vice by another, and to treat the ancients as meriting no regard, merely because others have rated them too highly; nor do I propose to banish their authority, in order to exalt reason alone, though a disposition prevails to establish their sole authority, to the prejudice of reason.

But it is worth while to recollect, that, in our inquiries, the knowledge of some things depends on memory; they are purely historical, and we have only to determine whether they have been faithfully recorded; others rest solely on the basis of reason, and are topics suited to the discursive faculty, since we examine them in hopes of discovering some truths hitherto unknown. This distinction will be of use, in regulating the measure of our reverence for the ancients.

In cases where we merely wish to know what has

been committed to writing, as in history, geography, the languages, or theology; in short, for whatever rests upon some simple fact, or institution, divine or human; we necessarily have recourse to books, since they contain all that can be known; to them, it is evident, we must be indebted for our information, without the possibility of adding to it. For example, if the question were, who was the first king of France—through what place geographers draw the first meridian—what words are contained in a dead language—or any other point of the same kind, we have no means of satisfaction but written documents; our object is simply to know what they contain, and we can derive no assistance from any other quarter. Here it is authority alone that can enlighten us.

In Theology, however, authority has the greatest influence; for it is inseparable from truths of this order, which can be known through its medium alone; so that, to obtain complete certainty on matters the most incomprehensible to reason, it is enough to find them in the Sacred Writings; while to evince the uncertainty of things that have the strongest appearances of truth, we need only show that they are not there; for the principles of Theology are above nature and reason; and the mind of man, too feeble to reach them by its own efforts, can attain these heights of intelligence only when borne upwards by an almighty and supernatural power.

It is very different with respect to subjects that fall under the cognizance of the senses and the dis-

cursive faculty. Authority becomes useless; and our only appeal is to reason. Each has its peculiar rights: the former may sometimes have the ascendancy; but here the other is supreme. And as subjects of this sort are perfectly adapted to the capacity of the human mind, it feels at full liberty to expand itself; it puts forth its productions with an exhaustless fertility, and its discoveries can be propagated without interruption, and without end.

Thus it is, that Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Natural Philosophy, Medicine, and Architecture, and all the sciences which can be submitted to the test of reasoning and experiment, must be cultivated, in order to arrive at perfection. The ancients worked upon the rude sketches of their predecessors; and we, again, shall leave them to our posterity in a more finished state than we received them. As their perfection is the result of time and labour, it is evident, that, even should we have been less successful than former ages, yet our united exertions must produce greater results than those of either, separately taken.

If we clearly comprehend this distinction, we shall lament the infatuation of those who rest their proofs upon mere authority in natural science, instead of reasoning and experiment; and we shall be shocked at the pervicacity of others, who employ reasoning alone in Theology, instead of the authority of Scripture and the Fathers. We must rouse the courage of those timorous minds who dare not attempt discoveries in science, and confound the insolence of the daring spirits who are so fond of starting novelties in Theology.

It is the misfortune of the present age that many novel opinions in Theology, unknown to all antiquity, are maintained pertinaciously, and received with applause, while a much smaller number of philosophical ones are treated as if their falsehood had been demonstrated, because they clash, though perhaps very slightly, with received dogmas. Our deference to the Philosophers of antiquity, it seems, is an inviolable duty, but to the earliest Fathers a mere matter of courtesy!

I leave it to those who are capable of judging, to animadvert on the important consequences of an abuse that so wrongfully disturbs the order of the sciences; and I believe, that there are few who do not wish our inquiries would take a different course; since in matters of Theology, which are profaned with impunity, new discoveries are indubitably errors; while they are absolutely necessary to perfect many subjects of an inferior order, though in this case men are afraid to meddle with them.

Let us distribute more impartially our confidence and our distrust, and set bounds to this reverence for the ancients; a sentiment, which, as it was produced by reason, must also be limited by reason; and let us consider, that if they had been fettered by a dread of adding to the knowledge they had received, or if their contemporaries had been as reluctant as we are to admit new truths, both they, and their posterity, would have lost the benefit of their discoveries.

And as they employed previous discoveries as instruments for making new ones, and by their for-

tunate hardihood opened the way to higher attainments, we should avail ourselves of their acquisitions for a similar purpose, look upon them as the means, not the end, of our studies, and thus endeavour, by imitating their example to surpass it. For can any thing be more absurd, than to treat our forefathers with less freedom than they treated their predecessors, and to hold them in that extreme reverence, to which they can lay claim, only because they had no such feeling for those, who had that advantage of priority towards them, which they have towards us?

The secrets of nature are concealed; her agency is perpetual, but we do not always discover its effects; time reveals them from age to age; and although she is always the same in herself, she is not always equally well known. The experiments that make us acquainted with her, are constantly multiplying, and as these alone are the sources of natural science, our deductions multiply in the same proportion.

In this manner we can adopt, at the present day, different sentiments and new opinions, without despising the ancients or treating them with ingratitude, since the elementary knowledge they gave us served as steps for our own. We are indebted to them for our superiority; and, standing on an elevation to which they have conducted us, the least effort raises us still higher; and with less toil, and less glory too, we find ourselves above them.

Thus we have been able to discover objects that

it was impossible for them to perceive. Our view is more extended; and though they knew as well as ourselves all the parts of nature they observed, yet they did not know so much, and we see more than they saw.

Still it is very strange, to what a degree we revere their sentiments. It is a crime to contradict them, and an unpardonable offence to add to them; as if they had left no more truths to be discovered.

What is this, let me ask, but to treat with contempt the reason of man, and to put it on a level with the instinct of brutes, by losing sight of the essential difference between them, namely, that the operations of the rational faculty may be carried on indefinitely, while instinct remains always the same. The cells of bees were measured as exactly a thousand years ago, as at the present day; and in making them, each of these insects preserves the hexagonal form as accurately the first time as the last. It is the same with every thing that animals produce by means of this secret impulse. Nature instructs them just as far as necessity requires; but this perishable knowledge is limited by their wants. As they receive it without study, they have not the happy talent of cultivating it; and every time it is bestowed, it is new to them: for Nature designing to maintain the inferior animals in an order of very limited perfection, while she inspires them (that they may not become extinct,) with a knowledge that is simply necessary, and always equal

to their exigencies, does not permit them to increase it, lest they should pass the limits she has prescribed.

It is not so with Man, who is destined to an endless existence. Ignorant at his birth, he gains knowledge continually in his progress through life; he avails himself, not only of his own experience, but of that of his predecessors; for, while his memory retains his own acquisitions, those of the ancients are always before him in their writings; and, as he preserves this knowledge, he can also easily increase it; so that the men of the present day, in a certain sense, are in the same state as the ancient Philosophers would have been, if they could have lived to our times, adding to their knowledge all that their studies could accumulate during so many ages. Hence, by a peculiar prerogative of our nature, not only each individual advances daily in the sciences, but the whole human race together are making constant progress, as the world grows older; the successive generations of men resembling, in this respect, the different periods of the life of an individual. In short, the whole train of human beings, during the course of so many ages, may be considered as the very same person, existing through all time, and continually learning.

Thus we see with how little propriety we revere antiquity in its philosophers; for as old age is the period at the furthest remove from infancy, who does not perceive that the old age of this Universal Man must be sought for, not in the

times nearest his birth, but in those that are more remote?

Those whom we term the Ancients, were in fact novices in every thing, and formed, properly speaking, the infancy of Humanity; and, as we have added to their knowledge the experience of succeeding ages, it is in ourselves we must find that antiquity we so reverence in others. They deserve, however, our admiration, for the consequences they so ably drew from the few principles they possessed; and claim our indulgence on those points in which they failed, more from the want of experience, than of intellectual ability.

For example, they were excusable in the notion they formed of *the milky way*, when the feebleness of their vision not having received the assistance of art, they attributed its colour to a greater density in that part of the heavens, which reflected the light with superior force. But shall not we be inexcusable in retaining such an opinion, since, by the aid of the Telescope, we have discovered that infinity of small stars, whose abundant lustre explains the true cause of this whiteness?

Had not the ancients also reason for saying, that all corruptible bodies were contained in the sphere of the lunar heavens, when, during so many ages, they had never remarked the dissolution or generation of bodies out of this space? But may not we be assured of the contrary, when all the world has had sensible evidence of the ignition of comets, and their disappearance, far above that sphere?

And as to a vacuum—they might well say, that nature would not permit it; since all their experiments tended to show that nature abhorred and disallowed it. But if the late experiments had been known to them, probably they would have seen reason to affirm, what they had reason to deny, at a period when a vacuum had never been observed. In deciding that nature could not endure a vacuum, they must be understood as speaking of nature only as it appeared to them: for, to state the matter generally, it is not enough to have seen a phenomenon constant in a hundred, or a thousand instances, or in any given number, however great; for if there remains a single instance to be examined, it will suffice to prevent the general inference. In fact, in all cases, where the proof depends on experiment, and not on demonstration, we cannot make a universal assertion, without a general enumeration of all the parts, and of all the different instances.

So, when we say that the diamond is the hardest of all bodies, we mean, of all bodies we know; and we cannot, and must not, include those we do not know. And when we say, that gold is the heaviest of all bodies, it would be rash to comprehend in this general proposition, those bodies which are not yet known to us, though there may be such in nature. In this manner, without charging the ancients with absurdity, we may assure ourselves of the contrary to what they said;—and, whatever appearance antiquity may assume, Truth must always have the advantage, although lately discovered, since

it is more ancient than any opinions that ever existed respecting it; and it would argue gross ignorance of nature, to imagine that she begins to exist, only when she begins to be known.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REFLECTIONS ON GEOMETRY.

We may have three principal objects in the study of truth: first, to discover it when we are seeking it; secondly, to demonstrate it, when we are in possession of it; and lastly, to distinguish it from falsehood, when we examine it.

I am not going to speak of the first; but shall treat more particularly of the second, which includes the third: for if we understand the method of proving truth, we shall possess, at the same time, the means of distinguishing it from error; since, in examining whether its proofs are conformable to ascertained rules, we shall know whether it is rigorously demonstrated.

Geometry excels in these three points, and has explained the art of discovering unknown truths, in that branch of the science termed Analysis; on which, after so many excellent works have appeared upon the subject, it is needless to enlarge.

The proper mode of demonstrating truths already discovered, and of illustrating them in such a manner that their evidence must be irresistible, is the single topic I mean to handle; and, for this purpose I only need explain the Geometrical method, in which it will be found perfectly exemplified.

Before doing this, however, I must just hint at a method still more excellent and complete, but

which can never be adopted: for what surpasses Geometry, surpasses our powers also: and yet, notwithstanding its impracticability, a few words respecting it will not be amiss.

This most perfect method, which would form demonstrations of the highest excellence, could it be followed, is founded upon two principles, first, never to employ a term of which the sense has not been clearly explained; secondly, never to advance a proposition that is not demonstrable by truths already known; in a word, to define all the terms, and to prove all the propositions. But, to observe the order I am explaining, I must point out what I mean by *Definition*.

The only definitions admissible in Geometry, are what logicians call *verbal Definitions*, which consist in the imposition of names on things which have been clearly specified in terms perfectly well known, and of these alone I am speaking.

The advantage of their use, is to give brevity and perspicuity to language, expressing by a single word, what would otherwise require many; and in doing this the name imposed is divested of every other meaning, if it have any such, and retains only that to which it is appropriated. Let us give an example.

If we have occasion, in speaking of numbers, to distinguish such as are divisible by two, from those which are not so, to avoid the frequent repetition of this property, a particular name is given them after this manner; I call every number divisible by two, *an even number;* this is a geometrial definition, for

having clearly marked out a certain object, namely, every number divisible by two, I give it a name, divested of every other meaning, and used only for the object described.

Hence, it appears that verbal definitions are quite unrestricted, and never liable to contradiction; for surely, we are at liberty to give any name we like to an object we have clearly described. We must only take care not to abuse this right, by giving the same name to two different things. Even this is not absolutely forbidden, provided we do not confound consequences, and transfer them from one thing to another; an error, for which, if we fall into it, a very certain and infallible remedy may be applied: we have only to substitute mentally the definition in place of the thing defined, and always to keep it in recollection, so that whenever we speak, for example, of an even number, we understand precisely, that it is a number divisible by two; and these two things must be inseparably united in our thoughts, so that, as soon as one is mentioned, the mind shall revert instantly to the other. For Geometricians, and logical thinkers in general, give names to things only to abbreviate language, and not to diminish or alter the idea of the objects they discourse upon: and they assume, that the mind always supplies the whole definition to the short expressions, which are employed merely to avoid the confusion arising from a multitude of words. Nothing more readily and effectually wards off the captious surprisals of sophists, than this method, which we should always

have at hand, and which would alone be sufficient to banish every kind of obscurity and ambiguity.

Having made these remarks, I return to the explanation of that perfect method which consists, as I before said, in defining every thing, and proving every thing.

This method is unquestionably beautiful, but it is absolutely impracticable; for the first terms we attempt to define, suppose preceding ones to serve for their explanation; and likewise the first propositions we attempt to prove, suppose others which precede them, and thus it is evident, that we can never arrive at the first in either series. And pushing our inquiries further and further, we necessarily arrive at primitive words, which cannot be defined, and at principles so evident, that we can find none more evident to prove them by.

Hence it appears, that it absolutely surpasses the powers of the human mind to treat any science whatever, in a method absolutely perfect; but it does not follow, that we ought to abandon every kind of method. For there is one species, that of Geometry, inferior indeed, because it is less convincing, to that just described, but not less certain. It does not define every thing, and it does not prove every thing, and in these respects it is inferior; but it assumes the truth of such things only as are clear and certain to the common sense of mankind, and therefore is perfectly true; the constitution of the human mind being its basis, instead of artificial and logical deduction.

This method, the most perfect attainable by man,

does not consist in defining every thing, and demonstrating every thing; or, in defining nothing, and demonstrating nothing; but takes a middle course, not defining such things as are clear and evident to all men, but defining all others; not proving things perfectly known, but proving all others. Those persons who undertake to define every thing, and to prove every thing, and those who neglect to define and prove things which are not self-evident, equally violate it. Of this method, Geometry furnishes the most perfect specimens. It gives no definition of *space*, *time*, *motion*, *number*, *equality*, and a multitude of similar terms, because they point out the things signified so naturally to those persons who understand the language, that any explanation of them would obscure rather than enlighten.

Nothing can be more frivolous, than the attempt of some persons to define these primitive words. What necessity is there, for example, to explain what we mean by the word *Man?* Do we not know full well what being we wish to designate by that term? and what advantage did Plato think to procure for us, by saying, that *man was a two-legged animal without feathers?* As if the idea the single word gives us, without any additional terms, were not clearer and more certain than what is presented in this useless and even ridiculous explanation, since a man is not bereft of humanity when he loses his legs, nor does a cock acquire it when he loses his feathers.

Some persons are so absurd as to define a word by itself. I have met with people who would define light in this manner: *Light is the luminous motion of a lu-*

minous body; as if we could understand the word *luminous* without knowing the meaning of the word *light.*

We cannot define *Being*, without falling into the same absurdity. For every definition must begin with the phrase, *it is*—either expressed or understood, so that to define *being*, we must say, *it is*—and thus, in fact, employ in the definition the term to be defined.

We see, from these instances, that there are words incapable of definition; and if nature had not supplied this defect by the common notions she has given to mankind, all our expressions would be indeterminate. Instead of this we use them with the same confidence and certainty, as if they had been explained in the most unambiguous manner. Nature gives us, without words, conceptions more luminous than can be acquired by any artificial explanations.

It is not because all men have the same idea of the essences of things, that I affirm it impossible and useless to define: we may take *Time* for an example. Who can define it? And why should we make the attempt, since every body knows what we mean when we speak of Time, without any laboured explanation? yet there are many different opinions about the *essence* of time. Some say it is *the motion of a created thing;* others, that it is *the measure of motion.* It is not, then, the nature of things, that I affirm is known to all men, but simply the relation between names and things; so that, when the word Time is pronounced, every one who hears it thinks of the

same object, which does away with the necessity of defining the term; although in examining what Time is, men, after studying the subject, will adopt different conclusions; for definitions, I repeat, are used only to distinguish the objects we name, and not to point out their nature.

We may apply the word *Time* to the motion of a created being, for as I have already said, nothing is more unrestricted than a verbal definition: but it follows from this, that there will be two things called *Time*; the one is what every body understands, of course, by the word, and what any one who speaks our language calls by that term; the other will be, *the motion of a created being*; for, according to our new definition, this also will receive the same appellation. We must then be careful to avoid ambiguities, and not to confound consequences. For it will not follow, that what we commonly mean by the word, is really *the motion of a created being*. We are at liberty to call these two things by the same name, but we cannot make them agree in nature, as well as in name.

Thus, if a person make this assertion,—*Time is the motion of a created being*, we must ask what he means by the word *time*, that is, whether he uses it in the ordinary and received sense, or whether he divests it of that, and gives it the meaning of *the motion of a created being*. If he uses it only in the latter sense, we cannot contradict him, since a term may be defined at pleasure, and consequently there will be two things with the same name; but if he attaches the ordinary meaning to the word, and

yet pretends to understand by it *the motion of a created thing*, the assertion will be open to contradiction. It is no longer an allowable definition, but a proposition that must be proved, unless it be self-evident, and then it is a principle or axiom, but still not a definition; for in this assertion we do not take the word *Time* to signify the same thing, as the *motion of a created being*, but we mean that what we conceive by the word Time is the motion in question.

I should not have dwelt so long on this topic, did I not know how necessary it is to understand it perfectly, and that both in familiar conversation and scientific discourse, instances like those I have mentioned, are perpetually occurring. But I am persuaded, from my experience of the confusion of debates, that we cannot too deeply imbibe that taste for perspicuity, to promote which, rather than for the sake of its professed subject, this essay has been composed.

How many persons there are who suppose they have defined time, when they have said that it is *the measure of motion*, still attaching its ordinary meaning to the word, and yet they have announced a proposition, not a definition!

How many there are too, who believe they have defined motion, when they have said, "*Motus nec simpliciter motus, non mera potentia est sed actus entis in potentia.*" While if they give its ordinary meaning to the word motion, as they really do, this is not a definition, but a proposition, and thus they confound definitions, which we call verbal, which are true unrestricted definitions, legitimate and geometrical, with those that are called definitions of things,

which are restricted propositions, and subject to contradiction. They assume the license of forming these as well as the others, and each person defining things in his own manner, by a freedom as improper in definitions of this kind, as it is allowable, in the former, a total confusion ensues, and losing all order, and all just discrimination, they lose themselves too, and wander in inextricable labyrinths.

We shall never fall into these errors, if we pursue the geometrical method. This most logical science avoids defining such primitive words as *space*, *time*, *motion*, *equality*, *majority*, *minority*, *whole*, and others, whose meaning is self-evident. But these excepted, the other terms it employs are so well explained and defined, that we have no need of a dictionary to understand them; in a word, all its terms are perfectly intelligible, either from their native perspicuity, or by definitions. In this manner it avoids all the errors incident to the first particular, which consists in defining those things only that require definition; and it is as successful in reference to the other point, which consists in proving such propositions as are not self-evident.

For when it arrives at primary truths, it stops, and demands our immediate assent to them, since there is nothing clearer to prove them by: so that the truth of every thing that Geometry propounds, is perfectly established either by intrinsic evidence, or by a deduction of proofs.

Hence, if this science does not define and demonstrate every thing, it is for the simple reason, that it is impossible.

It may seem strange, perhaps, that Geometry cannot define those things which form the peculiar objects of the science. It defines neither motion nor number, nor space, and yet these three things are what it particularly treats of, and to each of which a separate branch of it is devoted, namely, mechanics, arithmetic and geometry, the last being the name both of the genus and the species. But our surprise will cease, if we recollect, that this admirable science being conversant only with objects of the greatest simplicity, the very quality which adapts them to the science renders them incapable of definition: so that, the absence of definition is rather an excellency than a defect, since it arises, not from the obscurity of the objects, but, on the contrary, from their extreme clearness, which is so great, that if it does not produce all the vivid convictions of demonstration, it has all its certainty. Geometry assumes that we know what is meant by the words *motion*, *number*, *space*, *&c.* and without needlessly stopping to define them, penetrates into their nature, and discovers their wonderful properties.

These three things, which comprehend the whole universe, according to those words, "*Deus fecit omnia in pondere, in numero, et in mensura*—" God created all things by weight, number, and measure," have a reciprocal and necessary connection. For we cannot imagine motion, without something that moves, and this being one, presents that unity which is the origin of all numbers. And, lastly, as motion cannot exist without space, we see these three things included in the first. Time also is included,

motion and time being relative to each other: for quickness and slowness, which are the differences of motion, have a necessary relation to Time. Thus there are certain properties common to all these things, the knowledge of which reveals to the mind the greatest wonders of Nature.

The chief of these, motion I mean, comprehends the two infinities which are to be met with every where; an infinity of greatness, and an infinity of littleness.

For, however rapid any motion may be, we may conceive one still more so, and again another, and so on to infinity, without ever arriving at one incapable of acceleration; and, on the contrary, however slow any motion may be, it may be retarded more and more to infinity, and never be reduced to such a measure of slowness, that it could not still descend an infinite number of degrees without sinking into rest. In the same manner, however great any given number may be, we can conceive of one still greater, and another beyond that, and so on to infinity, without ever reaching one that cannot be increased; and, on the contrary, however small a number may be, as the one hundredth, or ten thousandth part of a unit, we can conceive parts successively smaller to infinity, without ever arriving at zero, or nothing.

However great a given space may be, we can conceive one still greater, and so on, to infinity, without ever arriving at one that cannot be augmented: and, on the contrary, however small a given space may be, we can conceive one less and less to infinity, without ever arriving at an indivisible unextended point.

It is the same with respect to time. We can conceive it greater without end, and less without arriving at an instant, or mere nothing of duration.

In a word, suppose any motion, any number, any space, any time whatever, there will be still a greater and a less; so that they are all placed between nonentity and infinity, and always at an infinite distance from these two extremes.

None of these truths can be demonstrated, and yet they are the foundations and first principles of Geometry. But as their extreme clearness, and not their obscurity, renders them incapable of demonstration, this want of proof is not a defect, but an excellence.

Geometry, therefore, cannot define its objects, nor prove its principles, for this single but satisfactory reason, that the one and the other have naturally such an extreme perspicuity, that our reason is more powerfully convinced by it than by any argumentation. For what can be more evident, than this truth, That any number whatever may be increased, or may be doubled, that the rapidity of any given motion may be doubled, and that any given space may be doubled? And who can doubt, that a number may be divided by two, and that half again, in the same way? For will this half be nothing? And granting that, how can two halves, that is to say, two nothings, ever become a number?

In the same manner, however slow any motion may be, may it not still be reduced one-half, so as to pass through the same space in double the time, and may not this last motion be reduced again?

Will it ever become simple rest? And if so, how can two halves of velocity, each of which is simple rest, form the original velocity.

Lastly, may not a space, however small, be divided into two parts, and these parts also? And how can these halves be indivisible and unextended, when we allow that united together they make the original space?

There can be no physical principles of knowledge in the human mind, that precede these, or surpass them in clearness. Nevertheless, as nothing is so absurd as not to be met with sometimes, we find men of distinguished ability, who are confounded by the doctrine of Infinites, and can by no means give their assent to it.

I never knew a person who thought that space could not be augmented, but I have met with some men, very able in other respects, who have maintained, that a space might be divided into two indivisible parts, notwithstanding the absurdity that supposition involves.

I have set myself to find out what could be the cause of this mistake, and have discovered that the only reason of importance was, that they could not *conceive* a division continued to infinity, whence they inferred, that such a division was impossible. It is a weakness natural to man, to believe, that he possesses truth absolutely; and therefore he is always disposed to deny what is incomprehensible, whilst in fact he discerns nothing naturally but falsehood, and ought to take for true only those things, the contrary of which appear false to him.

For this reason, whenever a proposition is inconceivable, we must suspend our judgment, and not on this account deny it, but examine the contrary position, and if we find that evidently false, we may confidently affirm the first to be true, however incomprehensible it may be. Let us apply this rule to our subject.

There is no Geometrician who does not believe space to be infinitely divisible. A Geometrician can no more exist without this principle, than a man without a soul; and yet no one can comprehend an infinite division; but of its truth a single reason will be amply sufficient to convince us, namely, that we perfectly comprehend it to be false, that in dividing a given space, we can ever arrive at an indivisible, that is to say, an unextended part. For can any thing be more absurd, than to pretend, that by continually dividing a space, we can obtain such a division, that on repeating the operation, each of these parts should be indivisible and unextended? I would ask those who hold this notion, whether they clearly conceive how two indivisibles can touch one another; if they touch in every part, they form but one thing, and therefore the two together are indivisible: and if they do not touch in every part, they touch in one part, and not in another, therefore they have parts, and are not indivisible.

Let them confess, as in fact they do when pushed to a point, that this proposition of theirs is as inconceivable as the other: let them acknowledge, that it is not by our capacity of conceiving things, that we judge of their truth, since these two contrary pro-

positions being equally inconceivable, it is nevertheless certain, that one of them is true.

But to these chimerical difficulties, which have no relation but to our weakness, let them oppose self-evident and irrefragable truths. If it were true that space is composed of a certain finite number of indivisible parts, it would follow, that of two spaces, each a square, that is, having all its sides equal and its angles right angles, the one which should be double the other, would contain twice the number of these indivisible points. Let them keep in mind this consequence, and then exercise themselves in arranging points in squares, till they meet with two, of which one has double the number of the other, and then I will make every Geometrician in the world submit to them. But if this be naturally impossible, that is, if there be an absolute impossibility to range points in squares, of which one shall have twice the number of the other, as I could demonstrate in this place if it were worth while, I may leave them to draw the inference.

And to relieve them in the difficulties they sometimes meet with, as in conceiving a space that has an infinite number of divisible parts, which may be passed over in an extremely short time, we must remind them, that they ought not to compare things so disproportionate as the infinitesimals of a given space, and the short time in which they may be passed over; they should compare the whole space with the whole time, and the infinitesimals of the space, with the infinitesimals of the time, and then they would find, that an infinite number of parts might be passed

over in an infinite number of instants, and a small space in a short time: in all this there would be no disproportion to excite their astonishment.

Lastly, if it seems strange, that a small space should have as many parts as a large one, let it be recollected, that these are proportionably smaller; and they have only to look at the sky through a small glass to familiarize themselves with the fact, when each part of the sky will be seen through a corresponding part of the glass.

But, if they cannot comprehend how parts so small as to be imperceptible to us, can be divided into as many as those of the firmament, there is not a better remedy than to observe these smaller parts with magnifying glasses of a very high power; after doing so, they will easily conceive, that, could glasses still more powerful be employed, the same objects might be apparently magnified to the amazing size of the firmament, they would then appear to be divisible with extreme ease, and it would only be necessary to remember, that the powers of nature infinitely surpass those of art.

But, lastly, how can they be certain, that these glasses have changed the natural size of the objects? Is it not possible, on the contrary, that they have merely restored to our perception the true dimensions, which our visual organs, like convex lenses, had apparently contracted? It is vexatious to be detained by such trifles, but we must trifle sometimes.

To all clear thinkers, it will be enough to say, that two nothings of extension, can never make an

extension. But there are some who expect to escape from this obvious truth, by the following reply; that two nothings of extension may as well make one extension, as that two unities, of which neither is a number, should make a number by their union; to this we reply, that with equal reason they might say, that twenty thousand men make an army, though one man would not: that a thousand houses make a town, though one does not: that all the parts make a whole, though one part does not; or, (to confine ourselves to numbers,) that two pairs make a quaternary, and ten decades make a hundred, though one would not. But this is not to reason fairly, but to confound the immutable nature of things, with their arbitrary and conventional names, which depended on the fancy of the persons who first imposed them. For it is plain, that the name *army* has been given to twenty thousand men, that of *town*, to a number of houses, that of *decade* to ten units, merely to facilitate discourse. For the same reason, the words unity, binary, quaternary, decade, hundred, have been formed, varying according to our fancy, though these things are in fact essentially of one kind, and all bear a proportion to one another, differing only by being more or less; and though after the names have been given, a binary is not a quaternary, nor a house a town, any more than a town is a house. But though a house is not a town, it is nevertheless not a mere nothing in relation to a town: there is a great difference between not being a certain thing, and being nothing in relation to it.

To understand the subject thoroughly, let it be observed, that the only reason why unity is not reckoned a number, is, that Euclid and the authors who first treated of Arithmetic, when they were laying down several properties common to all numbers, to avoid frequently repeating, that this property belonged to all numbers, *excepting unity*, excluded *unity*, from the signification of the word *number*, in virtue of the right we have already noticed, of making definitions at pleasure. If they had been so disposed, they might have excluded *two* and *three*, or any other number they pleased, for this would have been allowable, if duly notified; as, on the other hand, unity, and even fractions, may be ranked among numbers; and this, indeed, we are obliged to do in general propositions, to avoid saying every time: this property belongs to all numbers, even to unity and fractions, and in this extended sense I have employed the word in what I have written.

But Euclid himself, who has taken from unity the name of a number, (which he had a right to do,) in order to show that it is not a nonentity, but, on the contrary, of the same kind with numbers, thus defines homogeneous magnitudes,—"*Magnitudes*," says he, "*are said to be of the same kind, when one by repeated multiplication, becomes greater than the other.*" And, consequently, since unity, by being multiplied, may exceed any number whatever, it is of the same kind as numbers, in its essence and immutable nature, according to that very Euclid who refused to call it a number.

It is not the same with an indivisible point, in re-

lation to extension; for, not only do they differ in name, an arbitrary circumstance, but in kind, by their very definition; since an indivisible point, multiplied as often as you please, so far from exceeding a given extension, can never form any thing but one single indivisible point; which, as we have already shown, necessarily results from the nature of things. But, as the proof of this last position is founded on the definition of an indivisible point, and of extension, let us proceed to finish and complete the demonstration.

An indivisible point, is that which has no parts; and extension, is that which has various separate parts. According to these definitions, I affirm that two indivisible parts being united, can never form extension.

For when they are united, they touch each other in some one part; and the parts by which they touch are not separated, for then they would not touch. But, by the definition, they have no other parts; therefore, they have no separate parts; and, consequently, do not form extension, by the definition of extension, which includes a separation of parts.

The same result follows from the union of any number of indivisible points, and for the same reason; therefore, an indivisible point, multiplied as often as you please, will never make an extension. It is not, then, of the same kind, by our definition of homogeneity.

In this manner we demonstrate, that indivisible points are not of the same kind as numbers. Hence two units may very well make a number, because

they are homogeneous; but two indivisible points will not form extension, because they are not homogeneous.

Thus we see how little reason there is to compare the relation between unity and numbers, to that which subsists between indivisible points and extension.

But, if we must needs take a comparison from numbers that shall justly illustrate the subject of extension, we must consider the relation of the cipher to numbers; for the cipher is not of the same kind as numbers, because, being multiplied, it never exceeds them. So that it is a true indivisible, in respect of numbers; as an indivisible point is a cipher, in respect of extension. We find a similar relation between rest and motion, and between an instant and time, for all these are heterogeneous magnitudes; since, being infinitely multiplied, their only product will be indivisible quantities, as in the case of indivisible points of extension, and for the same reason. And we may observe a perfect correspondence between these modes of magnitude; for they are all divisible to infinity, without merging into indivisibles; so that they occupy the mean between infinity and nonentity.—Such are the admirable relations Nature has established, and such the wonderful infinities she presents to us, not to comprehend, but to admire.

To conclude this discussion by a single remark, I add, that these two infinities, though immensely different, are so connected, that a knowledge of the one leads necessarily to a knowledge of the other. For numbers, as they can be always augmented, so,

it is evident, they may be diminished; for, if we can multiply a number a hundred thousand times, we can also take a hundred thousandth part of it, dividing by the same number by which we multiplied it; and thus every term of augmentation becomes a term of division, by changing the whole number into a fraction. So that infinite augmentation necessarily includes infinite division.

And in space, the same relation appears between the two contrary infinities; that is to say, since space can be infinitely extended, it follows that it can be infinitely diminished, as will appear by an example.

If we look through a glass at a vessel which is constantly receding in a direct line, it is evident that the point of the glass, through which we observe any given point of the vessel, will be constantly rising, as the vessel recedes. Now, if we suppose the course of the vessel to be perpetually lengthened to infinity, on a plane parallel to the horizon, this point will continue to rise, and yet will never reach a position coinciding with the horizontal ray, drawn through the eye to the glass, but will always approximate, without ever touching it, by a continual division of the space remaining below the horizontal point. The necessary inference must be apparent, which is to be deduced, from the infinite elongation of the vessel, in reference to the infinite division of space, and the infinite minuteness of the small portion remaining below the horizontal point.

Persons who are not satisfied with these reasons, but persist in the belief, that space is not infinitely

divisible, must never pretend to master Geometrical demonstrations; they may rest assured, that though they may be well informed on other subjects, they cannot go far in this; for it is possible to be a very able man, and a bad Geometrician.

But those who have a clear perception of these truths, will admire the grandeur and the power of Nature, in the twofold infinity which surrounds us wherever we are; and they will be taught by this wonderful fact to know themselves, placed, as it appears they are, between an infinity and a nonentity of extension, between an infinity and a nonentity of number, between an infinity and a nonentity of motion, and between an infinity and a nonentity of time. Hence they may learn to estimate the true value of their own minds, and be led into a train of reflection, infinitely more useful than all the rest of Geometrical science taken together.

I thought myself obliged to go through this long discussion for the sake of those persons who, though they may not at first comprehend this twofold infinity, are yet capable of being convinced of its reality. And though there are many whose knowledge of the subject would allow them to pass over this Essay, yet possibly, while it will be necessary to some, it may not be entirely useless to others.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON THE ART OF PERSUASION.

THE art of Persuasion has a necessary relation to the procedure of the mind in giving its assent, as well as to the circumstances of the objects presented for belief.

Every one knows, that the two inlets by which opinions find their way into the soul, are its two principal powers, the Understanding, and the Will. The most natural would be that of the Understanding, for our assent ought never to be given, except to demonstrated truths; but the most usual, though contrary to the order of nature, is that of the Will; since most men are generally induced to believe, not by argument, but by pleasure. This method, nevertheless, is so mean, dishonourable, and preposterous, that it is universally disavowed. Every one professes not to believe, and even not to love, any thing but what he knows to be really deserving of his belief or affection.

I do not here treat of divine truths, which I am far from considering as fit topics for the art of persuasion, for they are infinitely above nature: God alone can put them into the soul, by the method which he approves. And I am aware, that he chooses that they should pass from the heart into the understanding, and not from the understanding into the heart, in order to humble that proud fa-

culty of reason, which pretends to decide what objects the will should choose, and in order to cure that diseased will, which its unworthy attachments have totally corrupted. Hence saints, when speaking of divine things, instead of saying, we must know them before we can love them, (a proverbial expression respecting the things of the world;) say, on the contrary, that we must love them in order to know them; and it is one of their most useful maxims, that we can enter into the truth only by love.

Thus it appears that God has established a supernatural order, quite contrary to the order which it is fit men should observe respecting natural objects. But men have perverted this order, treating secular objects as they ought to treat sacred truths; for, in fact, we scarcely believe any thing excepting what pleases us. Hence arises our reluctance to receive the truths of the Christian religion, which is so totally opposed to our pleasures. "Tell us pleasant things, and we will hear thee," said the Jews to Moses, as if pleasantness ought to regulate belief! And to correct this disorder, by an order conformable to himself, God does not impart his illuminations to the understanding, till he has subdued the rebellion of the will by a celestial sweetness, which charms and bears it away.

I shall confine myself, therefore, to such truths as lie within our province; and, in reference to these, we may say, that the understanding and the heart are the gates by which they are admitted into the soul. But, alas! how very few enter by the un-

derstanding, compared with the crowds introduced without the permission of reason, by the rash caprices of the will!

These powers have each their peculiar principles and springs of action.

Those of the understanding are natural and universally known truths; as, for instance, that "the whole is greater than a part;" besides many particular axioms, received by some persons, and not by others; but which, wherever they are admitted, even though false, are as cogent as if they were true, in producing belief.

Those of the will are certain natural and universal desires; as for instance, the desire of happiness, which no one is without; besides many particular objects that every one endeavours to obtain; and which, since they are capable of giving pleasure, though pernicious, are as powerful in exciting the action of the will, as if they contributed to our real well-being.

So much for the powers which induce our assent. But as to the qualities of things that ought to effect persuasion, they are exceedingly various.

Those of one class are deduced, by necessary consequence, from common principles, and acknowledged truths. Of these, we may be indubitably convinced; for, by showing the relation they bear to received principles, conviction necessarily and inevitably follows: and it is impossible that they should not be received into the mind as soon as we can logically connect them with truths already admitted.

Again, there are other things, which have an intimate connection with the objects that excite pleasure; and these also are received with certainty. For the soul, as soon as it perceives something that will bring it to an object it loves supremely, unavoidably tends towards the secondary object with joy.

The effect of things which have this twofold connection, namely, with received truths and with the desires of the heart, is so certain, that nothing in nature can be more so; and on the contrary, what has no relation either to our previous belief or to our pleasures, is irksome, false, and absolutely foreign to our nature.

In all these instances there is no room for doubt; but it is not so when the things of which we desire to produce the conviction, are indeed firmly established upon well-known truths, but are contrary nevertheless, to the pleasures that most vividly affect mankind; there is great danger of their evincing (as experience too commonly testifies,) what I before stated, that this imperious soul, which boasts of acting according to reason, will follow by a rash and shameful choice, the desires of a corrupted will, in spite of whatever resistance may be made by an enlightened understanding.

This makes the balance doubtful between truth and pleasure: the knowledge of the one, and the feeling of the other, give rise to a contest of uncertain issue; for, to decide upon it, we must know all that passes in the deepest recesses of a man's mind, which the individual himself can scarcely ever

Hence it appears, that, whenever we attempt to persuade, we must take into account, the character of the person addressed, and be well acquainted with his understanding and his heart; we must know what principles he holds, and what objects he loves. We must then examine what relation our subject bears to these principles, and to the objects, the supposed charms of which are so delightful. So that the Art of Persuasion consists as much in pleasing, as in convincing; and men are governed far more by their fancies, than by reason!

But of these two methods, the one, of convincing the understanding, the other, of affecting the heart, I shall here give rules for the first only; and this, too, for cases in which the principles are agreed upon, and firmly maintained. I know not if it be possible to frame an art which shall adapt arguments to the inconstancy of our caprices. The method of persuasion by exciting pleasure, is, beyond comparison, more difficult, more refined, more useful, and more admirable; and, if I do not treat of it, it is simply because I am not equal to the task; indeed, I feel so incompetent, that for myself, I believe the thing is absolutely impossible.

It is not, because I believe there are no rules for giving pleasure, as certain as those for demonstration; or that a person perfectly master of them, in theory and practice, would not as surely succeed in winning the regard of kings, and men of all classes, as in demonstrating the Elements of Geometry to those who have sufficient ability to comprehend the propositions. But I think, (perhaps my own

weakness makes me think so,) that such an art is unattainable. If any persons, however, are capable of it, they are some whom I am acquainted with; for none have clearer or more extensive views on this subject.

The reason of this extreme difficulty arises from the instability and uncertainty of the principles of pleasure. They are different in all men, and variable in each individual, to such a degree, that no man differs more from another, than he differs from himself at different times. A man has different pleasures from a woman; the rich, and the poor, have different pleasures; a prince, a soldier, a merchant, a citizen, a countryman, the old, the young, the healthy, the sick, all differ, and are changed by the most trifling accident.

But there is an art, which I am about to explain, that points out the connection of truths with their principles of belief, whether of truth or of pleasure, provided these principles being once determined, remain fixed and unaltered.

Yet, as there are very few principles of this sort, and, excepting Geometrical truths, which relate only to the simplest figures, scarcely any to which we invariably assent, and still fewer objects of pleasure which are not perpetually changing, I cannot tell (as I said before) whether this art can give fixed rules for adapting discourse to the inconstancy of our caprices.

This art, which I call the Art of Persuasion, and which (properly speaking) is only the management of methodical and perfect proofs, consists of three

essential parts: First, to explain, by means of clear definitions, the terms used; Secondly, to lay down principles or self-evident axioms, to prove the points discussed; and Lastly, always to substitute mentally, in the demonstration, the definitions in place of the things defined.

The reason of this method is evident. It would be useless to lay down a proposition, and to undertake its demonstration, without first clearly defining all the terms which are not quite intelligible. The demonstration also must be preceded by a statement of the self-evident principles that are requisite to form it; for if the foundation be not firmly laid, the superstructure will be insecure. And lastly, in demonstrating, if we did not substitute, mentally, the definition in place of the thing defined, an unfair use might be made of the various meanings of the terms. It is easy to see, that, by observing this method, we are sure of convincing; since all the terms being understood, and, by means of definitions, rendered perfectly unambiguous, the first principles likewise being granted, if we always substitute mentally, in the demonstration, the definitions in place of the things defined, the invincible force of the consequences must be felt in all their energy.

A demonstration in which all these circumstances are combined, can never admit of the least doubt; and one in which they are wanting, can never be conclusive. It is, therefore, of great importance to understand them, and have them at command. For this purpose, and to render their use

more easy and practicable, I shall state them all in a few rules, which will comprise every thing necessary for the perfect construction of definitions, axioms, and demonstrations; and consequently, for the whole method of Geometrical proofs in the Art of Persuasion.

RULES FOR DEFINITIONS.

I. Never attempt to define expressions which are so intelligible, that no clearer terms can be found to explain them.

II. Never allow any term that is at all obscure or ambiguous, to pass without a definition.

III. Employ, in the definition of terms, such words only as are perfectly intelligible without explanation, or have been already explained.

RULES FOR AXIOMS.

I. Never pass over a necessary principle, however clear and evident it may be, without having first inquired whether the person you argue with will grant it.

II. Place among axioms, only such truths as are self-evident.

RULES FOR DEMONSTRATIONS.

I. Never undertake to demonstrate self-evident propositions, since there can be none clearer to prove them by.

II. Prove all the propositions that are in any degree obscure; and employ for proofs only self-

evident axioms, or propositions already granted or demonstrated.

III. Always substitute mentally, the definitions in place of the things defined, to prevent deception from the ambiguity of the terms which the definitions are designed to limit.

These eight rules contain all the directions requisite to construct sound and irrefragable proofs. Three of them are not absolutely necessary; and, as it is very difficult, and almost impossible, always to follow them, they may be passed over without material injury; although, whenever it is in our power to observe them, the demonstration will be more perfect. They are the first of each set:—namely,

For the Definitions—Define no terms that are perfectly well known.

For the Axioms—Never omit to require an explicit assent, even to such axioms as are perfectly evident and simple.

For the Demonstrations—Never attempt to demonstrate self-evident propositions.

For it will not be esteemed an unpardonable offence, to define and explain things which are very evident of themselves; nor to omit requiring, before we begin our demonstrations, a formal assent to axioms which cannot be denied, when there is occasion for their use; nor, lastly, to prove propositions which would be admitted without proof.

But the five other rules are absolutely necessary; we can never dispense with them, without an impor-

tant defect, and often not without occasioning error: for this reason, I shall repeat them.

RULES NECESSARY FOR DEFINITIONS.

I. Let no terms in any degree obscure or ambiguous, pass without definition.

II. Employ, in the definitions, such terms only as are perfectly known, or have been previously explained.

RULES NECESSARY FOR AXIOMS.

Let the axioms consist only of self-evident propositions.

RULES NECESSARY FOR DEMONSTRATIONS.

I. Prove all the propositions, taking care to employ for proofs, only self-evident axioms, or propositions previously demonstrated or admitted.

II. Guard against the ambiguity of terms, by substituting mentally the definitions which limit and explain them.

Such are the five rules which comprise all that is necessary to render proofs convincing, irrefragable, and, in a word, Geometrical; the eight rules together will make them still more perfect.

We have now shown in what the Art of Persuasion consists. It is founded on two principles;—namely, That all the terms be defined; and, That every proposition be proved, by substituting mentally, the definition instead of the thing defined. But here it seems proper to anticipate three principal objections.

One is, that this method has no novelty; another, that it may be very easily learned without studying the elements of Geometry, since it is comprised in two words, (*define* and *prove*,) which are understood as soon as they are uttered; and lastly, that it is of very little service, since its use is for the most part confined to Geometrical subjects.

It must therefore be shown that there is nothing so little known, nothing more difficult to practise, and yet nothing of more general utility.

As to the first objection, that the rule, That we must define every thing, and prove every thing, is familiar to most persons, and that the Logicians have placed it among the precepts of their art,—I heartily wish all this were true, and so well known, that I might spare myself the trouble of investigating, with so much care, the source of all those defects in reasoning, with which we are indeed familiar.

But, so far is this from being the case, that, if we except Geometricians, who in all ages have formed a very small portion of mankind, scarcely an individual is to be met with, who really understands it. This will be readily allowed by those who perfectly understand the little I have already said. As for those who do not, I confess that what follows is not likely to give them any information.

But if the spirit of these rules has been imbibed, and if they have made a sufficient impression to be firmly fixed and rivetted in the mind, the difference will readily be perceived between what is here stated, and what some logicians have by accident said like it, in some passages of their writings.

Intelligent persons are perfectly aware what a great difference there may be between two similar words, according to the occasion of their use, and other circumstances. Can any one believe, that of two persons, who have read and learned by heart the same book, each is equally master of its contents? One, perhaps, comprehends it, so as to discern all its principles, to feel the force of the consequences, and of the answers to objections, and to understand the whole structure of the work; while to the other it seems to consist of mere words, and seeds of thought, which, although of the same kind as those that elsewhere spring up into fruitful trees, lie shrivelled, and without germinating, in the barren mind that has received them in vain.

Persons who use precisely the same expressions, differ amazingly in their power of apprehending their import; and, aware of this fact, the incomparable author of *the Art of Conversation* takes great pains to impress upon his readers, that they must not judge of the capacity of an individual by a good thing which he may happen to say. Instead of allowing a single clever remark to excite a vague admiration of the speaker, and of all he may say or do, "let them penetrate," says he, "the mind from which it proceeds; let them examine whether it is the effect of a good memory, or of a lucky hit; let them treat it with coldness and neglect, and observe whether he will be piqued, that his words do not receive their due applause. They will often find that a man will begin to retract what he has said, and may be led off from the high strain, which was his own, till he descends into another quite vul-

gar and ridiculous. They must, therefore, ascertain how the thought was held by the person who utters it, in what manner, by what means, and how far he possessed it; otherwise, their judgment will be precipitately formed."

I would ask any impartial person, whether this principle, "Matter is in its nature incapable of thought;" and this, "I think, therefore I am," were in effect the same, in the mind of Des Cartes, and in the mind of St. Augustine, who said the same thing twelve hundred years before.

I am, indeed, very far from asserting, that Des Cartes was not, in a sense, the author of these propositions, although he became first acquainted with them in the writing of that great saint; for I know the difference between writing an expression by chance, without any deep or prolonged reflection upon it, and perceiving in the same expression, a wonderful train of consequences, which proves the distinction of material and spiritual natures, and forms the firm basis of a metaphysical system; all which Des Cartes professed to effect with the propositions just mentioned. Now, without examining whether he was successful in his attempt, I will assume it to be a fact, and on this supposition, I affirm, that the expressions are as different in his writings from what they are in authors who have merely used them by accident, as a man full of life and vigour differs from a corpse.

One man shall say a thing, without being aware of its excellence; and another shall find in it a wonderful train of consequences, that makes it appear

quite a different thing: so that we may affirm, that the latter is as little indebted to the person from whom he first learned it, as a noble tree is to the man who, thoughtlessly and unknowingly, dropped the seed that produced it, into a rich soil, which, by means of its own fertility, has brought it to perfection.

The manner in which the same thoughts spring up in the mind of their inventor, and in that of another, is vastly different. Sometimes barren in their native soil, they become productive when transplanted. More frequently, however, it happens that a superior mind derives from its own thoughts all that they are capable of producing, and afterwards, other persons who have heard them extolled, but are incapable of appreciating their worth, borrow them for their own embellishment; and it is in this case that the difference in the meaning of the same word, according to the persons who employ it, appears most striking.

In this manner Logic has perhaps borrowed the rules of Geometry, without comprehending their force, and mixed them with others peculiar to itself; but it does not follow, that Logicians have imbibed the spirit of Geometry; and if they can give no other proof than a casual similarity of expression, so far from putting them on a level with Geometricians, who understand the true method of ratiocination, I shall be strongly disposed to exclude them from ever holding the same rank. For to have dropped an expression, and not to know that it includes all we want, and instead of following up its

meaning, to wander far away, in useless researches after things slightly connected with it, only bespeaks the short-sightedness of those who do so, and proves that they fail in attaining their supposed object of pursuit, for this simple reason, that they have never clearly discerned it.

A method of excluding error from our speculations, is an object of general inquiry. Logicians have professed to show the way to this object, but Geometricians alone have attained it; and excepting in their science, and such sciences as are formed on its model, there are no demonstrations deserving the name. The whole art is contained in the precepts we have laid down, and in them alone; all other rules are useless or erroneous. This I know by long acquaintance with men and books of all kinds.

As to those who allege, that the rules laid down by Geometricians contain nothing new, because they have them in substance, though confounded with a multitude of useless or erroneous ones, from which they cannot separate them, I pass the same judgment on such persons, as on those who, seeking for a diamond of great value, among a large number of counterfeits, from which they know not how to distinguish it, boast, that as long as they keep the whole number, they possess the real one, as truly, as he who, without troubling himself with the worthless heap, lays his hand at once upon the gem they are in quest of, and for which they retain all the rest.

A false mode of reasoning is a disorder which may be cured by the two remedies I have proposed;

but men have prepared another, of an infinite number of useless drugs, in which such as possess any virtue are lost and rendered inefficacious, by the noxious qualities of the whole composition.

To discover all the sophisms and ambiguities of fallacious reasoners, Logicians have invented barbarous names, which astonish those who hear them; and though they can disentangle all the complexities of this involved knot, only by taking hold of the two ends marked by Geometricians, they enumerate a strange number of others, in which the former are comprised, without knowing which are the right ones.

In this manner, (to change the figure,) such persons show us a number of different roads, which, they say, will conduct us to our journey's end, although only two of them will lead to it, and must be distinctly pointed out: and they pretend that Geometry, though it assigns them with certainty, offers nothing but what they already have in their power to bestow, and indeed much less. Let them not boast, however, of their wealth, but take care, lest their present should lose its value by its very abundance, and become worthless by its bulk.

There are an abundance of valuable things in the world; the question is, how to distinguish them; for it is certain that they are placed within our reach by nature, and their existence is matter of general notoriety. But we know not how to distinguish them. This is the universal defect. It is not in uncommon and extravagant things, that excellence of any kind is to be found. We elevate ourselves

to attain it, and place ourselves at a greater distance from it than ever. It is requisite more frequently to lower ourselves. The best books are those which every reader thinks he could have written. Nature, which alone is excellent, is easy and accessible by all.

I cannot, therefore, doubt, that these rules, if true, must be simple, unaffected, and natural, as they really are. Sound reasoning does not consist in the use of *Barbara* and *Baralipton*. We need not strain our faculties. These laborious and painful methods, by their unnatural loftiness, and vain, ridiculous inflation, fill the mind with a foolish presumption, instead of supplying it with solid and invigorating nourishment. One of the principal causes of error to those who enter upon these inquiries, is the imaginary assumption, that valuable things are inaccessible; a prejudice which is fostered by the use of the epithets *grand*, *high*, *elevated*, *sublime*. This spoils every thing. I would call them *low*, *common*, *familiar*. Such names would suit them much better. I abhor tumid phrases.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE REASONS OF SOME POPULAR OPINIONS.

I. I SHALL here put down my thoughts without a studied arrangement, though there may be one leading idea, which will give them a unity of design. This will be the true order, and will mark my object, by its very want of arrangement.

We shall see that all popular opinions are well-founded, and that the multitude are not so foolish as they are usually reputed. Thus the opinion which would destroy that of the people, will be itself destroyed.

II. It is true, that in one sense, men in general have false views of things: for though the opinions of the people are correct, the grounds of them are not well understood, since truth is supposed to be where it is not. Truth there certainly is in their opinions, but not exactly where they suppose it to be.

III. Ignorant people pay respect to men of high birth. Smatterers in knowledge affect to despise them, because, forsooth, birth is not a personal, but an adventitious distinction. Men of real ability respect them, not according to popular notions, but from more enlarged views. Some pious folks, whose knowledge is not very profound, affect to disregard birth, in spite of those considerations which

induce the respect of wiser men, and believe they are directed to do so by the new light which religion has imparted. But advanced Christians respect them from a far higher degree of illumination. Thus there exists a series of alternate opinions, varying according to the degree of knowledge possessed.

IV. The greatest calamity is a civil war; and this will surely happen, if the community think of placing the sovereign power in the hands of the most deserving; for every one will say that *he* is the man. The mischief likely to be caused by a fool who succeeds to the throne by hereditary right, is neither so great, nor so certain.

V. Why are the majority followed? Is it because they have more reason? No: but because they have more force. Why are ancient laws, and ancient customs, observed? Is it because they are most agreeable to truth and justice? No: but because they are uniform, and destroy the germ of discord.

VI. Dominion founded on opinion and imagination lasts for a time, and submission to it is agreeable and voluntary; but the dominion of force is perpetual. Thus opinion is the queen of the world, but force is its tyrant.

VII. What an excellent regulation it is, to distinguish men by their exterior, rather than by their mental qualities! As I am travelling, I meet an-

other man, and the point to be decided is, which shall pass? which of us shall yield the precedency? The least clever, do you say? Why, I am as clever as he is. We must come to blows, to settle the matter. But he has four lackeys, and I have only one. This difference is seen at a glance: we have only to count. It is my part to yield; and I should be a fool to pick a quarrel. Thus we go on peaceably, which is the greatest blessing of life.

VIII. In consequence of seeing royal personages attended by their guards, officers, and music, and other things, adapted to excite reverence and awe, their subjects are impressed with the same feelings when in their presence alone, without such accompaniments, because they do not separate in thought, the person of a sovereign, from the pomp with which he is usually surrounded. The major part of mankind, who do not trace the impression to its proper cause, believe it is owing to some natural potency. Hence such phrases as, "*The character of Divinity itself is marked upon his countenance.*"

The power of Kings is founded on the reason, and on the folly of the people, but especially on the latter. The greatest and most important thing in the world, is founded on weakness; and the foundation is admirably firm; for nothing can be more certain, than that the people will be feeble. What is founded on reason alone, is very insecure; as for instance, reputation for wisdom.

IX. Our magistrates are adepts in this mystery. Their halls of justice, their robes of scarlet and ermine, with the other insignia of their office, are all necessary. If physicians were to lay aside their cloaks, and the doctors in law and divinity, their hats and immense gowns, they would never be able to dupe the world, which, as matters stand, cannot resist the force of their credentials. Military men alone, require no disguise of this kind; because they have more direct means of procuring respect: they make their way by force; but men of the other professions, by show. For the same reason, our kings take no pains to disguise their persons. They are not masked in strange dresses, to indicate their rank; but are attended by guards and halberdiers, clad in armour, whose hands and strength are entirely at their service. The trumpets, and other musical instruments that announce their approach, and the legions that surround them, make the firmest tremble. They behold not the mere symbols of authority, but actual power. That man's reason must be powerful indeed, who could look at the Grand Seignior in his magnificent seraglio, surrounded by forty thousand Janizaries, as calmly as he would at another man.

If magistrates faithfully administered justice, if physicians understood the true art of healing, they might lay aside their professional garb. The majesty of the sciences would be sufficiently venerable of itself. But their science being imaginary, and not real, makes it necessary to assume these vain ornaments that strike the imagination; for on that

they have to operate, and thus make themselves respected. We cannot even see a barrister in his gown and wig, without a favourable impression of his ability.—The Swiss reject hereditary titles of honour, and prove their plebeian extraction, in order to be eligible for the highest offices.—If on a voyage, a pilot were wanted, a man would not be chosen because he, of all the persons on board, could boast the best descent.

X. Every one perceives, that in commercial or military enterprises, men labour at an uncertainty; but they do not understand the doctrine of chances, which shows that it must be so. Montaigne perceived that a lame reasoner is displeasing, and that custom governs all things; but he did not discern the reason of these effects. Those who only see *effects*, but do not see the *causes* of things, are like persons who have only eyes, compared with those who possess intelligence; and though there must be some intelligence to perceive these effects, yet, compared with that intelligence which discerns causes, it is like the mere bodily sense, compared with the intellect.

XI. How is it that a lame man does not offend us, but that a lame reasoner does offend us? Why, because the former allows that we have the right use of our legs, but the latter maintains that we are the lame reasoners. Were it not for this, his blunders would excite pity rather than anger.

Epictetus asks, How is it that we are not of-

fended if persons say that we have the head-ache, but that we are offended if they say we are illogical or imprudent? The reason is this: we may be quite sure that we have not the head-ache, or that we are not lame, but we are not so sure of the correctness of our mental operations. The only assurance we have of this, being the full conviction of our own understanding: when another person, with the full conviction of *his* understanding, sees the subject in a light directly opposite, we are thrown into suspense and astonishment; and still more, if a thousand others ridicule our choice: for our own understanding is then confronted to a multitude, a painful and difficult position. Such a contradiction never happens in the evidence of the senses respecting a bodily infirmity.

XII. To subject ourselves to inconvenience, is the rule of politeness: foolish as this may appear at first sight, it is really very proper. It means, I would do much to serve you; and, as a proof of my sincerity, see what I do without being able to benefit you. Besides, forms of respect serve to distinguish persons of rank. If to sit in an arm-chair were a mark of respect, we should show it to every body alike, but as some self-denial is required, we make the proper distinctions.

XIII. To be well dressed is not without its advantages: it shows that a number of persons have been at work for us: by our head-dress, it will be seen, that we have a valet, a perfumer, &c. But

there is something more than mere show or decoration, in having so many hands at one's service.

XIV. According to some folks, I am not to pay respect to a man merely because he is handsomely dressed, and followed by seven or eight footmen. This is very fine, truly! Of one thing, however, I am sure, that if I do not take off my hat he will give me a horse-whipping. His dress and retinue form a power: it is not so with one horse richly caparisoned in respect of another. Montaigne is so ridiculous, because he does not see the difference between admiring and inquiring into the reason of it.

XV. Some opinions of the common people are very sound: their preference, for instance, of hunting and other diversions to poetry. The half-wise ridicule this, and delight in marking what they consider folly. But there is reason in it, though beyond their comprehension. It is also well managed to distinguish men by external circumstances, such as birth and property. There are numbers who are pleased with declaiming upon the unreasonableness of this regulation; but it is very reasonable.

XVI. There is one great advantage in high birth: a man is as much known and respected at eighteen or twenty, as another would have been, on the score of merit, at fifty; so that thirty years are gained without any trouble.

XVII. There are some people who, in order to convince us of the injustice we are guilty of, in withholding our respect from them, are always repeating anecdotes of the flattering attentions paid them by persons of quality. I reply; only show us the merit by which you acquired the esteem of these illustrious personages, and we will esteem you as much as they do.

XVIII. If a man place himself at a window to watch the passengers, and I pass by, is it proper to say he placed himself there to look at me? No: for he had no thought of me individually. But he who loves a female for her beauty, does he really love her? No: for let the small-pox, without ending fatally, destroy her beauty, and his passion would subside. And if a man likes me for my judgment or my memory, does he like my very self? No: for I might lose these qualities without ceasing to exist. What then is this self, if it consists neither in the body nor the mind? And how can either body or soul be loved except for these qualities, which, since they are perishable, do not constitute myself? For, can the substance of a person's soul be loved abstractly, and certain qualities which belong to it? This is not possible; and if it were possible, would be unjust. We cannot, therefore, love a person, but only his qualities; or, if we love a person, we must say that an assemblage of qualities constitutes a person.

XIX. The things which give us most anxiety

are often of no real importance; as, for instance, to conceal the smallness of our property. Our imagination magnifies an atom of this sort into a mountain. In another mood, we should perhaps mention it without hesitation.

XX. Few men possess the power of invention: those who cannot invent form the majority, and consequently are the most powerful; and we may observe, that, in general, inventors are denied the glory they merit and claim for their discoveries. If they persist in wishing for it, and treat with contempt those who do not invent, all they gain is to be nicknamed and treated as visionaries. Let them take care, then, not to be ostentatious of their superiority, great as it unquestionably is, and learn to be content with the esteem of the few who can appreciate its value.

CHAPTER XXX.

DETACHED MORAL THOUGHTS.

I. Good maxims are very current; but their right application is neglected. For instance, no one doubts *that life itself should be hazarded for the public good:* and by many this is put in practice; but men will scarcely ever venture so much for the cause of Religion. *An inequality of condition is absolutely necessary;* but this being agreed upon, occasions the exercise not only of supreme dominion, but of the most absolute tyranny. *The mind requires a little relaxation:* this is very true, but often perverted into an apology for unbounded dissipation. Certain limits may be imagined, but in actual life there are no limits; the laws attempt to impose them, but men's minds will not submit to their control.

II. The commands of reason are far more imperious than those of a master; for in disobeying the one, a man is unhappy; in disobeying the other, he is a fool.

III. Why do you murder me? A strange question! do you not live on the other side of the water? If you lived on this side, my good Sir, I should indeed be an assassin for killing you; but you live on

the other side: I am acting, therefore, like a man of honour, and every thing is as it should be.

IV. Men of irregular lives charge the sober with acting unnaturally, but imagine that they themselves act agreeably to nature: thus, when a ship gets under weigh, the people on shore appear to be receding. The same expressions are used by all, a fixed point is necessary to decide. The port answers this purpose for the passengers; but where shall we find a similar point in morals?

V. As fashion regulates the agreeable, so it determines what is just. If mankind really understood justice, that most general of all maxims would never have been established: *That every one should follow the manners of his own country.* The lustre of real equity would have compelled the homage of all nations, and legislators would never have taken for their model, instead of this unchangeable rectitude, the fancies and whims of Persia and Germany. Its authority would have been acknowledged in all kingdoms, and through every age.

VI. Justice is that which is established; and therefore, all our established laws are considered just without examination, simply because they are established.

VII. The only universal rules, for ordinary things, are the laws of a country, and in other cases,

the majority. Why is this? It is because the power is there. Hence kings, who have power from other sources, are not regulated by the majorities in their cabinet.

VIII. No doubt an equality of goods is just; but as it is impossible to make men follow the dictates of justice by suasion, we must make them submit to force. Since it is impossible for justice alone to regulate men's minds without external force, physical power is legalized; so that justice and force being combined, peace, the greatest of all blessings, is the result. *Summum jus, summa injuria.*

To decide by majorities is the best method, because it is something visible, and includes the power of compelling obedience; yet, after all, it is a mode of deliberation adapted to inferior minds.

If it were possible, we should put force into the hands of justice; but as force will not suffer itself to be managed as we like, because it is palpable, while justice is an immaterial quality, to be disposed of according to our fancy, we put justice into the hands of force; and that which men are forced to observe, assumes the name of *Justice.*

IX. It is just to obey what is just; it is necessary to obey what is strongest. Justice without force is powerless; power without justice is tyrannical. Justice without force will be thwarted, as long as wicked men exist; force without justice will be reprobated by all the good. Therefore, justice and force must be joined, in order that what is just may

be powerful, and that what is powerful may be just.

Justice is open to dispute; force is palpable and indisputable. Thus we have only to add force to justice. Unable to make what is just to be powerful, we must make what is powerful to be just.

X. It is dangerous to tell the people that the laws are not just; for their obedience depends on the contrary belief. For this reason, they must be told, at the same time, that they must obey, because they are the laws; as our superiors must be obeyed, not because they are just, but because they are our superiors. If they fall in with these views, all sedition is prevented. This is all that properly belongs to the definition of Justice.

XI. It is well that the laws and customs of a state should be obeyed, simply because they are established, and that the people should understand that this makes them just. In this case, they will never disown their authority; but if it is attempted to assert their justice on any other grounds, it will easily be rendered questionable; and nothing more is wanted to dispose the people to revolt.

XII. When the question to be decided is, whether a war should be made, in which thousands will perish, and numbers of Spaniards be condemned to die, all depends on the will of one man, and he, too, an interested individual; the right of decision ought to be vested in a third unbiassed party.

XIII. 'I am handsome, therefore I ought to be feared;' I am strong, therefore I ought to be loved,' &c. Speeches of this kind are false and tyrannical. Tyranny consists in wishing to obtain, by one method, what can be obtained only by another. There are different orders of sentiment suited to the various kinds of excellence. Love is appropriate to the agreeable, fear to power, and belief to knowledge. There is a propriety in thus exercising the feelings, and it would be unjust to withhold them, or to fix them upon other objects. It is equally erroneous and tyrannical to say, 'Such a one is not strong, therefore I will not love him; he is not clever, therefore I will not fear him.' Tyranny consists in the desire of universal and irregular dominion.

XIV. Some vices adhere to us only by means of others; they are like so many branches which fall when the trunk is cut down.

XV. When a malignant passion can support its pretensions by reason, its violence is increased, and it never fails to set forth the claims of reason with the utmost force. When austerity or self-denial is not regulated by a regard to real good, and we are obliged to return to the dictates of nature, that also operates with greater power, owing to the revulsion.

XVI. The exhilaration produced by amusement is not happiness, for it arises from what is extraneous to ourselves: it is therefore dependent on circumstances,

and consequently liable to be disturbed by a thousand accidents and unavoidable misfortunes.

XVII. Great enlargement of mind, not less than extreme limitation of faculty, is charged with folly. Nothing obtains currency in the world but mediocrity. The multitude have established this order of things, and are on the alert to let no one escape, who attempts to break through at either end. As for myself, I have no hankering after distinction, and am content to remain just where society chooses to place me; or if I show any dislike to the lower end, it arises not from the inferiority of the situation, but because it is one of the extremes: I should be quite as reluctant to occupy the upper end. To pass beyond the medium, is to go out of the sphere of humanity; true greatness of mind consists in keeping within it; though it is too often imagined to consist in going out of it.

XVIII. In order to gain the reputation of being a poet, a man must put on the badge of a poet; or to rank high in the mathematics, he must put on the badge of a mathematician. But men of sense, who are free from all such vanity, wear no particular badges: the reputation of an embroiderer or a poet is all one to them. They are not called poets or geometricians, though they can decide on the merits of those who profess to be such. Their character is an enigma to the rest of the world. When they mix with society, they readily join in whatever happens to be the topic of conversation. They make

no unnecessary display of their talents, but wait till an occasion calls them into action, and then their superiority appears: with such persons, it is equally in character that their diction should not excite attention when the subject does not require eloquence, and that it should attract our notice, when the occasion admits of eloquence. It is poor commendation to say of a man, as he enters a room, that he is a clever poet; and an unfavourable indication of his abilities when he is appealed to only respecting a set of verses. Man is a being full of wants, and likes no persons so well as those who can satisfy them. Such a one, they tell me, is a good mathematician; but what have I to do with mathematics? I hear another applauded as a military tactician; but I detest war, and wish to live in peace with the whole world. What we want then, is a man of practical good sense, who can help us out in the daily occurrences of life.

XIX. When in health, we cannot imagine how we should behave if we were sick: but when sickness comes, it induces us to take medicine readily. The passions which agitated us in the time of health, and the desires after social amusements which were then so vivid, subside and vanish under the pressure of disease. Nature bestows upon us passions and desires suited to the change in our condition. We ought not therefore to blame her for the apprehensions we are prone to indulge: they are the offspring of our own fancy, which connects with the state in which we are, the feelings of the state in which we are not.

XX. Discourses on humility, cherish pride in the vain-glorious, but promote humility in the humble; and just in the same way sceptical discussions increase the confidence of the dogmatic. Few persons talk of humility in a humble spirit, or of chastity with a chaste mind, or of doubt with hesitation. We are made up of falsehood, duplicity and contradiction. We disguise ourselves from others, and even conceal ourselves from our own view.

XXI. Virtuous actions which have been concealed from notoriety are the most estimable. Whenever I meet with such in history, they delight me exceedingly. But then they have not been quite concealed, or they would not have been on record; and as far as this circumstance goes, it diminishes their merit: it would have been more virtuous to have resolved to conceal them entirely.

XXII. A jester is a contemptible character.

XXIII. Selfishness is hateful; therefore those who do not renounce it, but are satisfied simply with concealing it, are always hateful. 'By no means.' I hear some one say; 'For if we treat every one with courtesy, they have no just ground for hating us.' I grant this would be true, if the only thing hateful in self-love, were the uneasiness its indulgence occasions us. But if I hate it because it is unjust, aiming as it does to be the centre of every thing, there is not a moment in which I can cease to hate it. In a word, selfishness has two qualities; it is essentially

unjust, because it aims at becoming the centre of every thing; and it is offensive to others, because it would make them its slaves: for every one in whom *self* is a leading principle is the enemy, and would be the tyrant of the human race. Your courtesy, I allow, checks the injurious operation of selfishness, but does not alter the injustice of its nature; do what you will, you cannot render it an object of approbation to those who hate injustice; though the unjust may be pleased that they no longer meet it as an enemy: thus you continue unjust yourself, and please none but those who are likewise unjust.

XXIV. I do not admire a man who possesses one virtue in perfection, unless he possesses, at the same time, in an equal degree, the opposite virtue; and such was Epaminondas, in whom the greatest valour was combined with the greatest benignity. Where this is not the case, the character, instead of rising, sinks. Mental greatness is shown not by being at one extremity of the scale, but by touching both ends at once, and filling up the interval too. This, however, may be nothing more than the quick transition of the mind from one extreme to the other, so that it shall be really only in one point at any given time, like a firebrand which, by a rapid gyration, presents the appearance of a circle of flame; but if so, it indicates the agility, if not the comprehensiveness of the mind.

XXV. If our present condition were a happy one, there would be no occasion to shun the thoughts of it. Trifles console us, because trifles afflict us.

XXVI. I used to spend much of my time in the study of the abstract sciences, but I lost my relish for them, when I found so few with whom I could exchange thoughts respecting them. As soon as I began the study of Man, I saw that these subjects were not suited to his nature, and that I had mistaken the best method of employing my faculties, in attempting to investigate them, much more than others in remaining ignorant of them: I felt persuaded, however, that I should have plenty of companions in the study of man, which is our proper study. But here again I have been mistaken. There are fewer students of human nature than of Geometry.

XXVII. When all things move at the same rate (as in a vessel under sail) nothing appears to move. When a whole community falls into disorder, individual irregularities are not observed, because the standard is lost. But let any one set himself against the general current of society, and he becomes a fixed point, from which to measure the aberrations of the rest.

XXVIII. Philosophers have assumed the credit of being very ingenious, for the classifications of their moral systems. But can they explain why they should use four divisions rather than six? Why should they make four cardinal virtues rather than ten? Why define virtue to consist in *abstine et sustine*, (abstain and endure) rather than in any thing else? But mark, say you, a single word con-

tains a whole system. Yes, but it is of no use unless you explain it; and if you proceed to the explanation, and lay open the precept which includes all others, that very confusion is produced which you intended to avoid. In short, as long as moral precepts are contained in one word, they are unknown and useless; and when developed they reappear in their original confusion. Nature has constituted each of them separately; and though we may comprise one within another, each exists independently of the rest. Thus all these classifications and technical phrases have scarcely any use, but to relieve the memory, and to be a sort of indexes of their contents.

XXIX. If we wish to reprove a person for his good, and to convince him of his mistakes, we must take notice in what point of view he has considered the matter in question, and acknowledge the correctness of his discernment so far; for correct it will generally be, within certain limits. He will be pleased to find that he was not altogether in the wrong, and that his mistakes were only owing to not having surveyed the subject on all sides. For not to have noticed every thing, is not esteemed disgraceful, but men are reluctant to acknowledge themselves mistaken in what they have observed: and perhaps this feeling arises from its being a fact, that the mind is naturally correct in its perceptions of what it sees, just as the notices of the senses are always true.

XXX. A man's virtue must be measured, not by

his extraordinary efforts, but by his usual course of action.

XXXI. The great and the little are subject to the same accidents, the same vexations, and the same passions; but the former are near the circumference of the wheel, the latter are at the centre, and are therefore less agitated by the same movements.

XXXII. We must not take for granted that a man speaks the truth because he has no interest in telling a falsehood, for there are those who lie for the lie's sake.

XXXIII. Alexander's continence has had far fewer imitators than his drunkenness. While no shame is felt for being less virtuous than he was, men think themselves excusable if they are not more vicious. They fancy, that when they indulge in the vices of the great, they rise above the vices of the multitude, without reflecting that the same vices are common to both. They unite with the great just at the point where they unite with the multitude; for however elevated the former may be, they are still in contact with the rest of mankind at some points. They are not suspended in the air, and dissevered from all connection with the earth. If they are above us, it is because their heads are more elevated; their feet are as low as our own. They stand on the same level, they walk on the same earth, and by their lower extremities are as debased as ourselves, as children, or even as brutes.

XXXIV. It is the contest, and not the victory, which gives us pleasure. We like to see the combats of animals, but not the victor tearing the vanquished in pieces. We may ask, what object can there be excepting the victory? Yet when that is gained, our interest in the whole affair is lost. It is the same in games of hazard; it is the same in the investigation of truth. We are pleased to witness the collision of opinions, but not to contemplate truth when discovered; we behold it with pleasure only in a militant state. We are not interested by the things themselves, but by the search for them. And so there is pleasure in observing the conflict of two opposite passions; but when one gains the mastery, it becomes brute violence. In dramatic representations, we turn away from scenes which are placid without uncertainty, wretched without hope, and full of passion without refinement.

XXXV. Men are taught every thing excepting honesty; and yet nothing is deemed a greater insult than to suspect a person of a flaw in this point. So that men make the greatest pretensions to know the only thing which has never been taught them.

XXXVI. How silly the attempt of Montaigne to delineate his own character! and that not in an accidental manner, and contrary to his own fixed principles, a mistake to which every one is liable, but in accordance with his principles, and as his main and principal design! For to talk nonsense by accident, and without reflection, is common

enough: but to take pains to gossip, as he has done, is intolerable.

XXXVII. To utter expressions of pity for the unfortunate, does not thwart any natural propensity: on the contrary, men are well pleased to give this proof of their humanity, and thus to acquire a reputation for tenderness by bestowing what costs them nothing; but such benevolence is of little value.

XXXVIII. Could it have been supposed, that a man might possess the friendship of the king of England, the king of Poland, and the queen of Sweden, and yet might find it difficult to obtain a retreat and an asylum?

XXXIX. All objects that come under our notice have various qualities, and the mind has various inclinations: nothing is presented to the mind in a simple state, nor is the mind in a simple state when it examines any object; hence we sometimes laugh and cry at the same thing.

XL. The powerful, the beautiful, the witty and the religious, form distinct classes, and each is confined within certain limits, beyond which it can exercise no control. Sometimes, however, they come into collision: the strong and the beautiful contend for the mastery; but most absurdly, for their supremacy is of different kinds. Self-ignorance leads them to aim at universal dominion. But nothing can attain this, not even physical power, which has

no authority in the republic of letters, being only master of external actions.

XLI. *Ferox gens nullam esse vitam sine armis putat.* Some men would rather die than live in a state of peace: others would lose their lives sooner than go to war. There is no sentiment of the human mind, which, on some occasions, will not be held dearer than life, though the love of *that* is so strong and so natural.

XLII. How difficult is it to submit a literary work to the judgment of another person, without biassing his mind by our very manner of doing it. If we drop some such expression as, 'It seems to me very beautiful;' or, 'It is rather obscure,' we either beguile his imagination into the same sentiment, or prompt him to adopt the contrary. It would be much better to say nothing, for then he would form his own judgment, or at least would judge according to the mood he happened to be in, and as affected by circumstances, of which we were not the disposers. After all, our silence itself will produce some effect, and will be variously interpreted according to the humour we happen to be in; some conjecture will be formed from our looks and the tones of our voice. So easy is it to remove the judgment from its proper basis, or rather so very slight and unstable is that basis!

XLIII. Montaigne's opinion respecting custom is just; as soon as it is really such; and when we find it established, it ought to be followed, withou

examining whether it is rational or not, provided it opposes neither natural right, nor the divine law. The multitude, it is true, follows custom under the belief of its justice, or they would soon abandon it: for men do not like to own subjection to any thing but reason and justice. Custom, without this notion, would be looked upon as tyranny; whereas the dominion of reason and justice is no more tyranny than that of pleasure.

XLIV. The knowledge of external things, will never compensate, in times of affliction, for ignorance of what relates to our moral being: but moral wisdom will always compensate for ignorance of external things.

XLV. Time puts an end to our sorrows and our quarrels, because our characters alter, and we become as it were different beings. Neither the offender nor the offended is the same person. It is like a nation with which all intercourse has been broken off, but renewed after a generation or two have passed away. They are still Frenchmen, but not the same individuals.

XLVI. What are the features of our condition? Inconstancy, weariness, disquietude. If any one wishes to be thoroughly acquainted with the vanity of man, he has only to consider the causes and effects of love. The cause is *un je ne sais quoi*,* and the effects are terrible. This *je ne sais quoi*, such

* Corneille.

a little thing that we can scarcely discern its existence, shakes the earth, agitates princes, and armies, and the whole human race. If Cleopatra's nose had been a few lines shorter, the state of the world would have been changed.

XLVII. It seems to me that Cæsar was too old to set about amusing himself with the conquest of the world. This sort of amusement was suited to Alexander: he was a young man whose impetuosity it was almost impossible to restrain; but Cæsar should have been too sedate for such an enterprise.

XLVIII. Fickleness in our pleasures arises from a sense of the emptiness of those we have tried, and ignorance of the vanity of the rest.

XLIX. Kings and princes sometimes divert themselves. If they were always on their thrones they would soon be tired of them. Grandeur must be laid aside in order to be felt.

L. Whatever my state of mind may be, it is little influenced by the weather. The storm and the sunshine are within my own breast: the success or failure of my projects makes scarcely any difference. Sometimes I endeavour to rise superior to misfortune, and the glory of the attempt makes it pleasurable; while at other times, in the midst of prosperity, I am indifferent or disgusted.

LI. While putting my thoughts on paper, they

sometimes escape me; but this reminds me of my weakness, which I am so apt to forget, and affords as much instruction as the thoughts could do that I have lost; for I aim above all things to know my own nothingness.

LII. It is very striking to observe, that there are in the world men who have forsworn all the laws of God and nature, and yet observe others of their own making with the utmost scrupulosity: highwaymen for example.

LIII. 'This dog is *mine*,' says the child of a poor man: 'this is *my* place in the sunshine:' in such expressions we may detect the germ and image of a tyranny that would extend itself over the whole earth.

LIV. 'Have the goodness to excuse the remark, but your manners are awkward.' Were it not for this apology, I would not have taken what you said as an affront. Let me tell you, nothing is so offensive as an apology.

LV. People in general suppose, that Plato and Aristotle always appeared in full dress, with a grave and philosophic air. Instead of this, they were sociable beings, who could enjoy themselves with their friends like other people: and when they wrote their treatises on law and politics, it was to amuse and divert themselves, and formed the least philosophic and serious part of their lives. Their philosophical

character was shown much more in living without luxury and ostentation.

LVI. Men are prone to indulge wishes of evil: not against the unfortunate, but against those whom they behold in the pride of wealth: we shall be mistaken if we form a different opinion.

Martial's epigram on the one-eyed is worthless, because it suggests no consolation to those who are in that unfortunate situation, and serves only to display the author's wit: every thing of that sort is contemptible. *Ambitiosa recidet ornamenta.* A writer should study to please men of benevolence and genuine tenderness, not the unkindly and misanthropic.

LVII. I know not what to reply to compliments of this sort: 'I have given you a great deal of trouble; I fear I shall fatigue you; I am afraid this will be tedious:'—such speeches either embarrass or provoke me.

LVIII. A sincere friend is so valuable an acquisition, even for men of the highest rank, in order to guard their reputation and support their interests in their absence, that they should spare no pains to obtain one. But let them be very careful in their choice; for if they expend their efforts on a vain fool, he will be of no service, whatever he may say on their behalf, for no one will respect his opinion: he will be afraid to open his mouth for them, when he finds himself the weakest; and as his character

possesses no independence, it will not be surprising if he should join the rest of the company in abusing them.

LIX. Do you wish that men should speak well of you? Do not say so.

LX. Let not men ridicule those who are honoured on account of their official situation; but ask themselves whether they love any one excepting for adventitious qualities. All men naturally hate one another. I venture to assert, that if every thing were known which men say of each other, there would not be four friends in the whole world. To be convinced of this, only consider the quarrels produced by talebearing.

LXI. It is more easy to suffer death without thinking of it, than to think of it when in no danger of suffering it.

LXII. That a thing so visible as the vanity of the world should be so little apprehended, as to make the assertion, that it is folly to seek after its grandeur, appear strange and striking, is truly astonishing.

He who does not see the vanity of the world must be vain himself. And who does not see it, excepting young people who are taken up with diversions, regardless of the future? But take away their diversions, and you see them pine away with listlessness; they then have a sense of their own

nothingness, without understanding it: for this is wretchedness indeed, to suffer intolerable sadness, as soon as we are forced to self-reflection, and have no object to divert our thoughts.

LXIII. In all human things there is a mixture of truth and falsehood. Essential truth is different: it is purely and altogether true. The alloy of falsehood debases and destroys it. Nothing is true, understanding by the term, unmixed truth. Murder is bad. Yes: for we know very well what is bad and false. But can any one say what is good? Celibacy? I say it is not good, for it would bring the world to an end. Is marriage good? No; continence is far better. Is it right never to put persons to death? No; for the disorders of society would be horrible, and the wicked would kill the good. But is it right to kill? No; for this would destroy nature. We possess neither what is true nor what is useful excepting partially and mixed with what is pernicious and false.

LXIV. Evil may easily be met with, for its forms are infinite; but good is uniform. There is, however, a certain kind of evil as difficult to find as what is generally called good: and men often mistake this particular evil for a good. Indeed it requires an extraordinary capacity to attain such evil.

LXV. The ties which secure the regard of one class of men to another, are, generally speaking, ties of necessity; for a distinction of ranks is un-

avoidable. All men are ambitious of dominion, but only some possess the power. But the ties which secure the respect of individuals to one another, are ties of the imagination.

LXVI. We are so unfortunate that we cannot take pleasure in any pursuit but on the condition of being chagrined if we are unsuccessful; which may be occasioned by a thousand accidents, and happens every hour. Whoever should discover the secret of enjoying a good without being affected by the contrary evil, will have gained a great point.

LXVII. We must not forget our own nature; we are body as well as spirit, and hence pure demonstration is not the instrument of persuasion. How very few things are there demonstrable! Arguments act only on the mind. Custom adds strength to argument; it enlists the senses on its side, which imperceptibly carry the understanding along with them. Who can demonstrate that the sun will rise to-morrow, or that we shall die? yet what is more universally believed? Custom persuades men of it; this it is which makes so many Turks and Pagans, this makes soldiers and artizans. It is true we must not appeal to custom when we are in quest of truth, but we must have recourse to it as soon as the understanding sees where the truth lies, that our minds may be thoroughly imbued with belief, of itself so volatile a thing; for to keep the arguments constantly before us would be endless trouble. We must acquire a more easy belief, and

such is that of custom, which, without violence, without art, without argument, produces belief, and so inclines all our faculties, that it costs us no effort to retain it. The two parts of our frame must act in unison; the mind convinced by those arguments which it suffices to have understood once in our lives, and the senses persuaded by habit, and not allowed to allure us in a contrary direction.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE.

I. In proportion to a man's intelligence, a greater number of original characters will be observed in society. To common minds the various shades of mental constitution are imperceptible.

II. It is possible to possess a sound understanding, but one which, at the same time, is limited in its range: for we meet with men, who, while they are quite at home on one class of subjects, discover a total inaptitude for any other. Some can deduce consequences from a few principles, and others from many principles. For instance, there are those who are particularly versed in the properties of water, of which the principles are few, but their ramifications so minute, that the greatest penetration is requisite to trace them. Such persons are not likely to be eminent mathematicians, for the principles of Geometry are numerous, and the mind may be so constructed, that it can thoroughly comprehend a few principles, while it is unable to explore a science of which the principles are numerous.

Hence it appears that there are two sorts of intellect; one that can penetrate vigorously and deeply into the consequences of a given principle, and may be called the intellect of delicate discrimination; the

other that can comprehend a number of principles without confounding them, and is the geometrical intellect; the one is distinguished by quickness and correctness of tact; the other by comprehensiveness. The one may exist without the other, that is to say, the mind may be acute without comprehensiveness; or comprehensive without strength.

There is a great difference between the geometrical and the delicate intellect. The principles adapted to the former are palpable, but so remote from common use, that, through mere desuetude, it is difficult to turn our attention to them; but no sooner is this done, than they appear most obvious; and it would indicate unusual obtuseness of perception, not to reason correctly on principles so exceedingly plain.

But the principles adapted to a mind of nice discernment, are those brought into action in the daily business of life. No effort, therefore, is necessary to give our attention to them; they are before our eyes, and nothing is requisite on our part but clear perception: but that is indispensable; for the principles are so delicate and numerous, that it is almost impossible to prevent some escaping our notice. And the omission of any one principle leads into error; so that in the first place, a very clear perception is needed to discern all of them; and then a logical talent to apprehend their legitimate consequences.

All geometricians would discriminate with nicety had they a clear view of the requisite principles; and men of nice discernment would be geometricians, if they could only fix their attention on the principles

of a science so foreign to their habits. The reason, then, why some men of delicate minds are not geometricians, is, that they are absolutely incapable of fixing their attention on the principles of Geometry; but the reason why Geometricians are not men of nice discernment, is, that they are too abstracted; having been used to the well-defined and palpable principles of Geometry, and not to draw any inferences till they have familiarized themselves with first principles, they are bewildered on subjects of which the principles are too delicate to be so roughly handled. Indeed, the latter can scarcely be said to be the objects of perception, but rather of feeling; and wherever this is wanting, it is a defect not to be supplied by instruction. To apprehend things so delicate and so numerous, requires a tact extremely delicate and correct; and, for the most part, an attempt to demonstrate them geometrically would be futile: the principles are held so differently, that it would be an endless and unprofitable labour. The mind must seize upon the object at once, without any process of reasoning, at least none formally such. It is therefore very unusual for geometricians to possess this refined tact, or for persons who do possess it, to be geometricians: the former would treat matters of feeling geometrically, to a degree perfectly ridiculous, commencing with definitions and so going on to principles, a mode of reasoning entirely unsuited to such topics. Not that the mind arrives at a conclusion without reasoning, but the process is silent and inartificial; the expression of it in words is beyond the power of any man, and the feeling itself is possessed by very few.

Minds of delicate discernment, on the contrary, being used to decide at a glance, are so astonished when presented with propositions which must be incomprehensible, till they have learned a multitude of dry definitions and principles, and which they have never before seen in such guise, that they feel repelled and disgusted.

From both these classes persons of obtuse and illogical minds are excluded.

Geometricians, who are geometricians and nothing else, reason correctly, provided every thing is set before them by way of definition and principles: but when they attempt subjects on which this cannot be done, their blunders are intolerable; for unless the principles are extremely palpable, they are sure to err. Those again who are possessed of delicate discrimination, but without a particle of mathematical talent, have not the patience in matters of speculation and imagination, to descend to first principles which they never meet with in society and actual life.

III. It often happens, that in order to prove certain general truths, we take particular examples, the proofs of which rest upon the general truths; yet by the very use of them for this purpose, one effect is sure to follow, namely, that as we always suppose the difficulty to lie in the thing to be proved, these examples appear so much the clearer. Thus, when we wish to explain a general principle, we give the rule for a particular case; but if we wish to explain a particular case, we begin with the general principle. The thing to be proved always appears obscure, and

the medium of proof clear; for as soon as we set about proving any thing, our imagination is instantly filled with the notion of its obscurity; and, on the contrary, we suppose that what is employed to prove it must be clear, and therefore receive that without difficulty.

IV. All our reasoning is reduced to yield to natural feeling. But fancy is both similar and contrary to natural feeling; similar, because it does not reason, and contrary, because it is deceptive: it is therefore very difficult to distinguish between these two opposites. One man says, that my natural feeling is fancy, and that his fancy is natural feeling; and I, on my part, use the same language. A standard is wanted; reason offers one, but it may be turned in any direction; so that in fact there is none whatever.

V. Those who form their judgment of things by fixed rules, are, in respect of others, like those who carry watches in respect of those who have none. One man says, 'We have been here two hours;' another says, 'We have been here only three quarters of an hour.' I take out my watch and say to the first, 'You have been ill entertained it seems;' and to the other, 'Your time has passed away very agreeably, for we have been here exactly one hour and a half:' as to the people that say my time has hung heavily on my hands, and that I guess its length by my feeling, I only smile at their remark; they are not aware all the while, that I judge by my watch.

VI. Some men speak well, who are very indifferent writers. The reason is, that the place, the audience, and other circumstances, kindle their minds, and excite them to greater efforts than they could make without such a stimulus.

VII. It is difficult to come at what is valuable in Montaigne. What is faulty, (I mean exclusive of his moral sentiments,) might have been corrected in a moment, had any one given him a hint that he was too fond of telling stories, and of talking about himself.

VIII. It is a very bad practice to follow the exception instead of the general rule. We should adhere rigidly to the latter, and keep clear of exceptions. On the other hand, as it is certain that exceptions will sometimes occur, we must temper our strictness by good sense, that we may know when to admit them.

IX. There are persons who would not allow an author to write on subjects that have been already handled, because in that case (say they) he would write nothing new. But if the thoughts should not be new, yet their arrangement may be different. In playing at tennis the same ball is used, but one man can play it much better than another. It seems to me that with equal propriety they might find fault with a writer for employing the words already in use; as if the same thoughts, differently arranged, would not form substantially a new production, just as the same words, differently arranged, form new thoughts.

X. Men, in general, are more completely persuaded by the suggestions of their own minds, than by reasons offered them by others.

XI. It is natural for the intellect to believe, and for the will to love; so that these powers, when at a loss for real objects, fix on such as are false.

XII. Those strained exertions to which the soul is sometimes impelled, produce no lasting effects. It only makes a leap and immediately descends to its former level.

XIII. Man is neither an angel or a brute, but the misfortune is, that a being who aspires to be an angel, sinks into a brute.

XIV. If we know a man's ruling passion we make sure of pleasing him: and yet as every one has fancies contrary to his real interest, or even to what he deems to be such, the character of an individual often acquires a whimsical turn, which puts those persons out, who wish to ingratiate themselves with him.

XV. A horse does not trouble itself about the admiration of its fellow. Perhaps some sort of emulation is excited at the course; but put them in the stable, and the clumsiest and most ill shaped will not give up its oats to another. It is not so with human beings; no individual is content with his own advantages, but wishes to set himself off to the disadvantage of others.

XVI. The moral sentiments may be injured in the same way as the intellectual powers; for both are affected by intercourse with our fellow men, and according as this varies, they are improved or deteriorated. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know what society to select; but this knowledge can only be gained by having mixed with society without receiving a wrong bias. Here is a circle, from which happy are those who escape!

XVII. As long as we are ignorant of those parts of nature which are not absolutely necessary for our welfare, it is perhaps not to be regretted, that men should agree in their notions, though erroneous, since it allays the agitation of their minds. I may mention, as an example, the opinion that diseases and the changes of the seasons are affected by the moon. It is one of the chief maladies of our nature, to indulge a restless curiosity about things beyond the limits of our knowledge; and I do not know whether it is not a less evil, to be settled down in error respecting such objects, than to be perpetually disquieted by a useless curiosity.

XVIII. If lightning struck the lowest, as well as the highest places, poets and others, whose reasonings consist of analogies and resemblances taken from natural phenomena, would be left without arguments.

XIX. The intellect has a method of its own, that is, by principles and demonstrations. The heart has a different one. We cannot prove that w-

ought to be loved by formally explaining the causes of love; this would be ridiculous.

Jesus Christ and Saint Paul have employed the method of the heart, which is that of charity, much more than the method of the intellect; their great aim was not to illuminate the understanding, but to warm the heart; and so it was with Saint Augustine. This method consists principally in handling every topic that bears a relation to the main object, in such a manner as to render *that* more conspicuous.

XX. There are some persons who would put all the world under a disguise. They never speak of *the king*, but always of *the August Monarch;* you never hear them say *Paris*, but always *the metropolis of the kingdom*. There are some occasions when Paris should be simply called *Paris*, and at other times we may style it, *the metropolis of the kingdom*.

XXI. When the same words recur in a composition, and we find, on attempting to make an alteration, that their removal would injure the work, they ought to be left; for this settles their propriety, and to substitute others would indicate nothing but an hypercritical spirit, incapable of discerning the propriety of such repetitions sometimes: for no general rule can be given.

XXII. Those who throw their sentences into a certain form to make antitheses, are like persons who put in false windows for symmetry. They attend to the correctness, not of their thoughts, but of their

XXIII. One language with respect to another, is a cipher, in which words are changed for words, and not letters for letters; and thus an unknown language is decipherable.

XXIV. There is a model of the agreeable and beautiful, which consists in a certain relation between our nature (whatever that nature may be, strong or weak,) and the objects that excite pleasure. Every thing formed on this model pleases; a house, a song, an essay, verse or prose, women, birds, rivers, trees, apartments, or dress, &c. And every thing not formed on this model offends persons of good taste.

XXV. As we speak of poetical beauty, we might with equal propriety speak also of geometrical or medical beauty. Yet these phrases are not in use, and for this reason, that we know very well what is the object of geometry, and of medicine, but we do not know wherein that power of pleasing consists, which is the object of poetry. We do not know what that natural model is, which we ought to imitate, and for want of this knowledge, a number of strange phrases have been invented, such as, *the golden age, the wonder of the times, the fatal laurel, the beauteous star*, &c. this jargon is called poetic beauty! But let any one imagine a female attired after this model, and what will he behold? a damsel bedizened all over with mirrors and other finery, a sight which, so far from being graceful, will be extremely ridiculous; for what constitutes beauty in a woman is much better known than for what reason poetry

pleases us. Yet people who are no judges of female beauty, would perhaps admire our fine lady; in many villages she would be taken for the queen: and this is why some call sonnets written in this gairish style, *village queens.*

XXVI. If a passion or impression be properly delineated, we immediately find the original in our own breasts, where it existed before, without our knowledge, and directly conceive an affection for the person who has pointed it out: we feel indebted to him, not so much for presenting us with something new, as for making us better acquainted with our own stores: this community in knowledge necessarily excites our regard.

XXVII. To be agreeable, as well as true, is essential to eloquence; but this very agreeableness ought to have truth for its basis.

XXVIII. When people meet with a work written in a natural style, they are transported with delight and wonder: for where they expected to meet with an author, they find a man. On the other hand, persons of good taste, who, judging by themselves, expect on opening a book to find a man, are surprised to find only an author, *plus poeticè quàm humanè locutus est.* None honour nature more than those who show that she can speak on all subjects, Theology itself not excepted.

XXIX. The last thing we can settle in the composition of a work, is, how to begin it.

XXX. In discourse, (whether written or spoken,) it is ill-judged to digress from the topic in hand, unless for the sake of relieving the mind; and this too only at proper seasons; for unseasonable diversion is irksome: we are repelled and disgusted by it altogether: so difficult is it to retain any hold on the mind when it ceases to receive pleasure. Pleasure is the precious metal for which we barter away every thing.

XXXI. How vain is the art of painting, which excites admiration by copies, of which we do not admire the originals!

XXXII. The sense varies according to the words which express it; so that it receives dignity from words instead of giving it to them.

XXXIII. Those who are accustomed to judge by feeling, never can comprehend subjects that require a process of reasoning. They want to see through things at the first glance; they are unused to the investigation of principles. Others, on the contrary, who are accustomed to ratiocination, cannot apprehend subjects of mere feeling: for instead of seeing things at a glance, they are busy in examining principles.

XXXIV. True eloquence despises what is often called eloquence: true morality despises what currently passes for such: that is to say, the morality of sound reason despises the morality of fancy, which is without a standard.

XXXV. All the false beauties which we reprehend in Cicero, have found plenty of admirers.

XXXVI. To despise philosophy is to act the part of a true philosopher.

XXXVII. Many people hear a sermon in the same manner as they hear vespers.

XXXVIII. Rivers are moving roads which carry us wherever we wish to go.

XXXIX. Two similar countenances, neither of which would make us smile if seen by itself, make us smile by their resemblance, when seen together.

XL. Astrologers and Alchymists have some sound principles, but make a wrong use of them. Now the abuse of truths deserves to be punished as much as the introduction of falsehood.

XLI. I cannot pardon Des Cartes. He would have been well pleased to have made no reference to the Deity, in his whole system of Philosophy: he therefore introduces him just to set the universe in motion by a touch of the finger, and after that has nothing more for a God to do.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE.

I. No philosopher has shown himself better acquainted with the duties of man than EPICTETUS. The first lessons he taught, were, to consider the Deity as the supreme object of regard; to believe that he governs the universe with justice; to submit to him with sincerity of heart; to obey him on all occasions as managing every thing with infinite wisdom; and, by cultivating such a temper of mind, to stifle all complaints and murmurs, and prepare the spirit to endure with composure the most distressing events. "Never say, 'I have lost something,' say rather, 'I have given it back;' 'my son is dead, I have given him back;' 'my wife is dead, I have given her back'—and so with your property and every thing else. 'But I have been deprived of it,' say you, 'by a wicked man.' What then? he is only the instrument in the hands of God, why should you complain if *he* should require that back again which he was pleased to lend you? As long as he grants you the use of it, it is your duty to take care of it, as the property of another, just as a traveller would do at an inn." "You ought not," said Epictetus again, "to wish that events should happen according to your pleasure; but it should be your pleasure that they happen as they actually do. Recollect," he adds, "that you are an actor, and are to play your

part in the drama, as the master of the scenes chooses to appoint. If he appoints you a short piece, act it: if he gives you a long piece, act it: remain upon the stage just as long as he pleases; appear there a noble or a beggar, as he sees fit. It is yours to sustain with propriety the character appointed, but to determine what that character shall be, belongs to another: by frequent meditation familiarize yourself with death and the evils that appear most intolerable: never conceive any thing base, and indulge no desires to excess."

Epictetus shows, in numberless instances, how man ought to act; he enjoins him to be humble, to conceal his good resolutions, especially when first formed, and to execute them in secret, and assures him, that nothing can spoil them so much as publicity. He reiterates again and again, that man's main study and desire should be to know the will of God, and to obey it.

Such, and so just, were the views of this great philosopher, respecting the extent of human obligation: happy would it have been for him had he been equally well acquainted with human weakness.

But with this clear perception of the duty of man, he erred egregiously as to the ability of man. "God," said he, "has given to every man the means of fulfilling his obligations; these means are always in our power: happiness must be sought for, only from things within our power, which are given by God for the very purpose. We must examine what there is at our own disposal. Property, life, and reputation, are not in our power, and do not lead to God:

but the intellect cannot be forced to believe what it knows to be false, nor can the will be forced to love that which it knows will make it unhappy; these two powers, then, are completely free, and by these alone we can attain to the perfection of our nature; by these we may know God, love, obey, and please him: by these we may subdue every vice, acquire every virtue, and render ourselves holy and fit companions for the Deity." These proud sentiments led him into other errors; as for instance, that the soul is a part of the divine essence; that pain and death are not evils; that suicide is lawful, and may be considered, in cases of emergency, as a compliance with the call of God to leave this world, &c.

II. MONTAIGNE, born in a Christian country, made a profession of the Catholic Religion; in this there was nothing remarkable: but as he determined to form a moral system on rational principles, without the lights of the Christian faith, it is a peculiarity which marks his speculations from the first, that he views man as entirely destitute of divine revelation. He proceeds to involve every thing in such universal and unmingled scepticism, as to doubt of his very doubts; his restless uncertainty returns back upon itself in a perpetual circle; he shows himself equally hostile to those who say, that every thing is uncertain, and to those who affirm that some things are certain, for he would assert nothing positively. The essence of his opinions consists in a doubting that doubts of its own existence, and an ignorance that is ignorant even of itself. He expresses noth-

ing in positive terms; for to say that he doubted, would betray his main principle, by rendering it certain at least that he doubted. As a formal assertion would be contrary to his professions, he is reduced to the necessity of explaining himself by interrogations: for instance, to avoid the assertion, *I do not know*, he says, *How can I know?* He takes this phrase for his motto, placed under a pair of scales held by opposite weights in perfect equilibrium. In one word, he was a pure Pyrrhonist. All his discourses, all his *Essays* go upon this principle; and it is the only point which he pretends to have settled. He insensibly unsettles every thing that is considered most certain in society, not to establish the contrary, (for certainty is the only thing he cannot endure,) but merely to show, that appearances being equal on both sides, an unwavering belief is an impossibility.

In this temper, he ridicules all attempts at certainty in any thing; he opposes, for example, those persons who think of providing an effective remedy for law-suits, by the multiplicity and justice of the laws, as if they could cut up by the root those doubts which are the causes of litigation, as if they could form barriers which could stem the torrent of uncertainty and quell conjecture! In reference to this he says, *It would be as well to submit the decision of a cause to the first person that happens to pass by as to a bench of judges.* He seems perfectly unambitious of changing the established order of things; he is far from pretending that his opinion is better than that of any one else, but believes that all are bad. He only aims to prove the uncertainty of

received opinions; he maintains that the total abrogation of all law would do far more to lessen the number of disputes, than that huge mass of existing statutes, which, it seems to him, only serves to multiply them; for difficulties increase in proportion as they are examined, and obscurities become more obscure by comments. The best method, he tells us, of understanding a discourse, is not to examine it, but to take it as it appears at first blush: for as soon as we begin to study it, its meaning will become obscure.

On this plan, he decides at hazard on human actions and the events of history, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another; he adopts, without hesitation, the first views of things, not keeping his thoughts within bounds, by the restraints of reason, which, according to him, is a very unsafe guide. Delighted with exhibiting, in his own person, the contradictions that exist in the mind of a free-thinker, it is all one to him whether he is successful or not in argument, since either case illustrates the weakness of human opinion; so that his universal scepticism has the advantage of being fortified equally by victory and defeat. From this position, fluctuating and unsettled as it is, he attacks, with resistless intrepidity, the heretics of his day, on their pretensions to be the only true interpreters of Scripture, and from this position he explodes the horrid impiety of those who say that there is no God. He assails the Atheists particularly, in his apology for Raimonde de Sebonde, and asks them, abandoned as they voluntarily are to the light of nature, by rejecting all Revelation, by

what authority *they* pretend to judge of the Supreme Being, who, by the very definition of such a Being, must be infinite—*they* who do not really know the most insignificant object in nature! He asks them on what principles they take their stand, and presses for a reply. He examines all the arguments they can produce, and with an acuteness, for which he is remarkable, shows the weakness of such as they esteem the clearest and most indubitable. He asks whether the soul can really know any thing? whether it can know itself? whether it is a substance or an accident? body or spirit? and what each of these existences is? and whether there is not something different from both of them? whether the soul can know its own body? whether it knows what matter is? whether it knows how it can reason if it be matter? and how it can be united to a body, and feel what that suffers, if it be spiritual? When did the soul begin to exist? at the same time as the body or before? will it perish with the body or not? does it never deceive itself? does it know when it mistakes, since the essence of a mistake consists in forgetfulness? Again, he asks whether animals reason, think, or converse? who can decide what is the nature of *time*, *space*, *extension*, *motion*, *unity*; things by which we are surrounded, and yet utterly inexplicable: what is *health*, *sickness*, *death*, *life*, *good* and *evil*, *justice*, *sin*, terms which are constantly on our lips? Are there any principles of truth, and are those we believe, and which we call *axioms* or *common notions*, conformable to essential truth? Since we know only by Revelation that a Being perfectly good has given

true principles of knowledge, having created us to know the truth,—who can tell, apart from this illumination, whether being the offspring of chance, our notions are simply uncertain, or whether created by a malevolent being, he has given us false notions in order to lead us astray? Thus he shows that God and truth are inseparable, and that according as the former does or does not exist, is faithful or deceptive, so must the latter be. Who can tell whether that *common sense*, which is generally taken as the touchstone of truth, was designed for this purpose by him who bestowed it? who can tell what is truth? and how can we be certain of possessing it, without knowing it? who indeed can tell what *Being* is, a term too general to be defined, since we must make use of it in attempting to explain it: when we say that *it is* such and such a thing? Now if we do not know what the *soul* is, or *body*, *time*, *space*, *motion*, *truth*, *good*, nor even *being*, nor can explain our ideas of them, how can we be certain that these ideas are uniform in all men? we have no other mark, but an uniformity in consequences, and this is not a constant sign of uniformity in principles, for these may be very different, and conduct nevertheless to the same conclusions: every one is aware that truth is often educed from falsehood.

Lastly, Montaigne minutely examines the sciences: geometry for example; the uncertainty of which he attempts to show, in its axioms and undefined terms, such as *extension* and *motion;* he points out in numberless instances the defects of natural philosophy and medicine, and treats in the same manner, history,

politics, morals, and jurisprudence. So that without revelation, we must believe, according to him, that life is only a dream, from which we shall awake at death, and that as long as it lasts, we have actually as little perception of the principles of truth, as in the state we term *sleep*. In this manner, he unsparingly and rudely scrutinizes the qualifications of reason, bereft of supernatural aid: and having rendered it doubtful whether reason is itself reasonable, or whether brutes do not possess it either in a greater or less degree than man, he brings it down from the proud station it assumed, and places it as by favour, on a level with brutes, without allowing it to rise higher, till it has been taught by its Creator to what rank it really belongs: and more than this, he threatens, in case it murmurs, to reduce it still lower, which seemed to him no hard task.

Instead of permitting it to indulge in airs of foolish vanity, he allows it merely to make an acknowledgment of its weakness. We are rejoiced to witness, in this author, the defeat of proud reason by its own weapons, and the punishment of that horrible discord between man and man, which has reduced the human race, from that union with God which they vainly strive to attain by the maxims of their feeble reason, to the condition of brutes: and we should have felt a cordial esteem for the minister of such signal retribution, if, as an humble disciple of the Church, and in accordance with the rules of morality, after so usefully humbling men, he had persuaded them not to provoke, by fresh transgressions, that Being who alone could deliver them from

those sins which without his aid they could not have known. But, on the contrary, the tone of his morals is perfectly Pagan. Let us give a sketch of it.

Proceeding on this principle, that to mere human reason every thing is uncertain, and taking into the account the length of time we may seek for truth and happiness, without making any progress towards tranquillity, he comes to the conclusion, that we should dismiss all care about these subjects, and without perplexing ourselves, lightly skim over them, for fear of being lost, by pressing too hard; that we should assume those views to be true and just which appear to be so, because if we attempt to grasp such volatile substances, they slip between our fingers and leave our hands empty.

He would follow the evidence of the senses and common notions, because it would be doing violence to the mind to reject them; and since we are ignorant of the truth, we could not tell whether we should gain any thing if we disbelieved them.

He would also shun pain and death, because impelled by an instinct which he would not resist, for a similar reason. But he would not give full liberty to the natural emotions of fear, and dares not conclude that they are really caused by great evils, because there are emotions of pleasure which we accuse of being wrong; though nature, he says, asserts the contrary. "Thus there is nothing extravagant," he goes on to say, "in my conduct: I act like other people; and every thing which they do, under the foolish notion that they are following real good, I

do on another principle, which is, that the probabilities being the same on both sides, example and utility turn the scale." He would follow the manners of his country, because they have the authority of custom; he mounts his horse, because his horse suffers him, but without knowing whether he has a right to do it; on the contrary, he does not pretend to determine whether the animal has not an equal right to make use of his services. He would put some restraint upon his passions, in order to avoid certain vices: for instance, he would preserve conjugal fidelity on account of the pain which would ensue on its violation: utility and tranquillity being the constant rules of his actions. He disowns all acquaintance with that stoical virtues which his imagination depicted with a haughty mien, a savage countenance, its hair stiff and untrimmed, its brow wrinkled and covered with sweat, abhorring the sight of man, and seated in sullen silence, and in a painful posture, upon the edge of a rock; a bugbear, says Montaigne, fit to frighten children; a troubled being that roams about after rest, but never finds it. The virtue he loved was simple, sociable, gay, sprightly, and playful: pursuing whatever took its fancy, it sported with accidents good or bad: it gently reposed on the lap of a tranquil indolence, while it showed mankind that the rest they were so anxiously seeking, was to be found only *there;* and that, (to use one of his own expressions,) ignorance and incuriousness are two charming pillows for a sound head.

III. On reading Montaigne, and comparing him with Epictetus, we cannot resist the impression that certainly they were the two ablest defenders of the two most celebrated sects in the heathen world, and the only ones, among men destitute of the light of Revelation, that were in any degree consistent. In fact, what could men do, in the absence of Revelation, but follow one or other of these two systems? The first maintained there is a God, therefore he created man and must have made him for himself: he has created him such as he ought to be, in order to become just and happy. Man, therefore, can arrive at a knowledge of the truth, and has the capacity to rise to God the supreme good. The second system maintained, man cannot rise to God; his inclinations contradict the law of God, he is impelled to seek for happiness in visible objects, even the most degrading. Every thing, then, is uncertain, even the true good; and thus it seems we are reduced to be without any fixed standard of morals, or certainty in the sciences.

It is very gratifying to observe, in these different trains of reasoning, that both parties caught a glimpse of the truth they attempted to discover. It is pleasing to observe in nature the desire she manifests to represent God in all his works, and in which, since they are his image, we cannot fail to discern some traces of him; but how much more interesting is it to observe in intelligent beings, the efforts they make to arrive at truth, and to notice how far they have been successful and where they have failed! This is indeed the chief advantage to be derived from the speculations before us.

The source of the errors of Epictetus and the Stoics on the one hand, and of Montaigne and the Epicureans on the other, appears to consist, in not being aware that the present state of man differs from that of his creation. The one discerned some traces of his primitive grandeur, but being ignorant of his corruption, looked upon his nature as uninjured and in no need of a renovator, and thus was led to the very summit of pride. The others recognized his present misery, but ignorant of his primitive dignity, concluded that his nature was necessarily weak and beyond recovery; and so despaired of ever arriving at real good, and plunged themselves into extreme licentiousness. These two states of human nature, which must be known together, in order to apprehend the whole truth, if they are known apart, necessarily subject the mind to one of these two vices, pride or indolence; a thraldom which it is impossible for men to escape before they are in a state of grace: for if their disordered state does not issue in licentiousness, it displays itself by vanity, and they are always slaves to the malignant passions to which, as Saint Augustine remarks, men sacrifice in various forms.

The consequence of this imperfect knowledge of human nature has been, that those who knew the weakness of man, but not his obligations, degraded themselves by licentiousness; others who knew his obligations, but not his weakness, were puffed up with pride. It might perhaps be supposed, that by blending these two sects, a perfect system of morals might be formed; but instead of harmony,

the result of such an attempt would only be war and universal destruction; while one side dogmatised, and the other doubted; while one maintained the grandeur of man, and the other exposed his weakness, union and conciliation would be impossible: they could neither stand alone on account of their defects, nor unite on account of their contradictions.

IV. But these systems must be broken in pieces and destroyed, to make way for revealed truth. This it is which harmonizes the greatest contrarieties by an art which may well be called divine. Combining all that is true, dissipating all that is false, it determines with celestial wisdom, the point of union for principles that were totally irreconcilable in the schools of Philosophy. Nor is it difficult to find out the reason of this. The wise men of the world placed their contrarieties in the same subject; it was the same nature to which one sect attributed strength, and another weakness, but revelation instructs us to place the strength and the weakness in different subjects; all the infirmity is our own, all the power is God's. This, this, is the unthought-of and astonishing union, that none but God could reveal, because none but God could produce it, being the image and effect of the ineffable union of the two natures in the one person of the God-man.

It is thus that philosophy insensibly leads us to Theology, into which, indeed, we can scarcely avoid entering, whatever truth may be our immediate object; since it is the centre of all truths. And in the instance before us, it so admirably combines the

distinguishing tenets of two opposite systems, that we do not see how the partizans of either can refuse submitting to its guidance. If they delight in contemplating the power of man and the grandeur of his destiny, what can they imagine which will not infinitely fall short of the promises of the gospel, which bestows blessings worthy of nothing less than the death of a God. And if they are disposed to contemplate the weakness of human nature, their utmost conceptions can never equal the real impotence of sin, of which that death is the remedy. Each party will here find more than they could desire, and, above all, a perfect union of truths which neither could unite in a degree infinitely inferior.

V. Christians in general have little occasion for the lessons of Philosophy. But Epictetus has an admirable talent for disquieting those who seek repose in external things; he compels them to acknowledge that they are blind and miserable slaves, and that they can escape the error and misery they so much dread, only by yielding themselves without reserve to God. Montaigne again is incomparable for confounding the pride of those unbelievers who pretend that they possess real rectitude; and also for undeceiving those who are wedded to their own opinions, and who, without admitting the existence and perfections of the Deity, expect to find incontrovertible truths in science. He so thoroughly convicts reason of its ignorance and its errors, that it will scarcely be disposed to reject mysteries on account of their supposed contradictions; its courage will be so

daunted, that it will be very far from wishing to judge whether mysteries are possible—a point that men in general are too fond of agitating. But Epictetus, while he disturbs our indolence, excites our pride, and will be injurious to those who are not persuaded that real rectitude can be produced only by the Christian faith. On the other hand, Montaigne is absolutely pernicious to those who are inclined to impiety and vicious practices. For this reason, his statements ought to be guarded with great care and discretion, in reference to the situation and morals of those who read them. But the lessons of these two philosophers united, would perhaps be useful, because one would correct the faults of the other. It is true they could not communicate virtue, but they might render vice painful. Man would find himself acted upon by two opposite forces, of which, while one crushed his pride, the other would disturb his indolence, and he would be unable, by the resources of his own reason merely, to enjoy repose in either of these vices, or to escape altogether from both.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREAT.

I. To assist you in forming right views of your condition, let me suppose the following case:—

The inhabitants of a certain island had lost their king, but while seeking for him, met a stranger lately shipwrecked on their coast, who in features and figure so strongly resembled their sovereign, that he was taken for him, and acknowledged as such by the whole nation. At first he knew not how to act; but, at last, resolved to make the best of his good fortune, consented to receive their homage, and assumed the title of king. Yet, as it was impossible for him to forget his former condition, he could not help reflecting, at the very time he was receiving the homage of the people, that he was not the king they had been seeking, and that the kingdom was not originally his own. There were, therefore, two trains of thought constantly in his mind; one, by which he acted as king, and another by which he recognized his real state, and that it was only accident that placed him where he then was; the latter train he would keep in his own breast, while he would openly avow the former. He would regulate his conduct in society by the first, but his opinion respecting himself by the latter.

Now do not imagine that the possession of the riches you are heir to, is less fortuitous than the

election of this man to the throne. You had no personal claim, no natural right, any more than he; and it is by an infinite number of chances, not only that you are the son of a nobleman, but even that you exist. Your birth depended on a marriage, or rather on the marriages of all your ancestors. But on what did these marriages depend? On an accidental visit, on some trifling chat, or a thousand undesigned occurrences. You received your wealth, say you, from your ancestors? But were there not a thousand chances, whether your ancestors would ever obtain it, or that you would preserve it. A thousand other persons, of equal ability, either might not have acquired it, or have lost it after its acquisition. You imagine that by the natural course of things it has passed from your ancestors to yourself. But this is false. The social arrangements by which it has been so conveyed, were founded simply on the will of those who made the laws, which indeed they might make for very good reasons, but certainly not because you had a natural right to the property. If they had thought fit to ordain that it should return to the state after the death of your forefathers, you would have had no right to complain. Thus all the title by which you possess your property, is not a title founded on nature, but on the arbitrary institutions of men. If, when making the laws, their fancy had taken a different turn, you would have been poor; and had it not been, as I said before, for an accidental visit, or some occurrence equally fortuitous, you would never have been born in that high station, which, as the

law is established, puts you in possession of your property.

I do not mean to say, that this wealth does not lawfully belong to you, and that another person has a right to seize it; for God, who is its real proprietor, has allowed civil society to make laws for property, and when the laws are established, it is unjust to violate them. This makes some slight difference between yourself and the man we have been speaking of, who owed his elevation only to the mistake of the people, an elevation God would not have authorized, but would have obliged him to renounce, while he does authorize the tenure of your property. But in one point you perfectly agree with him, namely, that your right is not founded on any personal qualification or merit. Your soul and body would, in themselves, have equally suited the rank of a cobbler or a duke; there is no natural connection which should attach them to one condition more than to another. But what are we to infer from this? That you ought, like the man we have been speaking of, to have a double train of thought; and if you assume before men the honours allotted to your rank, you ought less openly, but more truly, to acknowledge that naturally you are in no respect above them. If the view of your adventitious distinctions elevates you, in your own apprehension, above the multitude, the consideration of the qualities common to you and to them, should humble you, and produce a sense of that perfect equality with all mankind which is your natural state.

The people who admire you probably are not

aware of this. They imagine that there is real greatness in nobility, and look up to men in higher stations as to beings of a superior nature. I do not say you are obliged to undeceive them; but do not disgrace your elevation by treating them with insolence, and especially do not so far forget yourself as to suppose that you are essentially of a higher order than the meanest among them. What would you say of the man who was made king by the mistake of the people, if he so completely forgot his natural condition, as to imagine that he deserved the kingdom, or that it belonged to him by right? You would only be amazed at his impertinence and folly. But is there less folly and less impertinence in men of rank, who live in utter forgetfulness of their natural state?

How important are right views on this subject! For all the extravagancies, the violence, and the haughtiness of the great, proceed only from ignorance of what they really are; it would be hardly possible, that if they considered themselves as personally on an equality with the rest of mankind, and were fully persuaded that nothing in themselves deserved the advantages God had bestowed upon them above others, they should treat those below them with insolence. To do this they must forget themselves, and believe, that they possess some intrinsic superiority, which is the very illusion I have been attempting to expose.

II. It is highly desirable you should know what is due to you, that you may not require more from

men than is your right; for this would be palpably unjust, though very common among persons of your rank, for want of understanding the nature of their rights.

There are in the world two kinds of greatness—artificial greatness and natural greatness. Artificial greatness depends on the will of men who believe, and reasonably too, that certain ranks should be honoured, and forms of respect attached to them. High station and nobility are of this kind. In one country nobles are honoured, in another commoners; in one, the eldest sons; in another, the younger. Why is this? simply because men have so determined it. Such things are matters of perfect indifference before they are established, but after their establishment it would be unjust to disturb them. Natural greatness is that which is independent of human opinion, because it consists in qualities of mind and body, which render their possessors essentially more valuable, as science, intelligence, genius, virtue, health, and strength. There is something due to each kind of greatness, but as they are of different natures, we owe them different regards. To artificial greatness, we owe the artificial forms of respect, that is, certain external ceremonies, which should be accompanied, as we have shown, with an outward acknowledgment of the propriety of this arrangement, though we are not obliged to imagine there is any real personal quality deserving respect in the persons we thus honour. We kneel for instance, in the presence of a king: we must not offer to sit down in the chamber of a prince. It

would be folly and absurdity to refuse these marks of respect.

But as for the respect which consists in esteem, it is due only to natural greatness; and, on the other hand, qualities inconsistent with natural greatness, merit our contempt and dislike. It is not necessary that because you are a duke, I should esteem you; but it is necessary that I should salute you. If you were a duke, and also a man of worth, I should pay you the respect due to both these kinds of greatness. I should not refuse the civilities that belong to you as duke; nor the esteem you deserve as a man of worth. But if you were a duke without being a man of worth, I would still do you justice; for while I rendered you the external homage attached by common consent to your rank, I should not fail to hold you in that contempt which the meanness of your character would deserve—such would be the just distribution of my respect. And injustice in reference to these subjects, consists in demanding personal esteem for artificial greatness, or the artificial forms of respect for natural greatness. Mr. B. is a better mathematician than myself, and for this reason, he would take precedence of me in company; I venture to say he is egregiously mistaken. A knowledge of geometry is a natural greatness; it demands a superior degree of admiration, but society has not attached to it any superior external marks of respect. I may therefore take the precedence in society, and still esteem Mr. B. my superior as a mathematician. In the same manner, if because you are a duke and

a peer of the realm, you are not content that I am uncovered in your presence, but demand my esteem, I must beg you to show me the qualities which deserve it. Do that, and you gain your wish, for it would be unjust to withhold it; but if you cannot do that, your demand is unjust, and be assured I would never comply with it, were you the greatest potentate on earth.

3. I wish that you may know your true condition, for it is that, which more than any thing else, persons of your station in life are ignorant of. What then, in your opinion, is it to be a person of rank? It is to be the master of many objects coveted by men, and thus to have the power of satisfying the wants and desires of numbers. These wants and desires draw them round you, and ensure their attendance; otherwise they would scarcely look at you: but they hope, by their respect and officiousness, to obtain some share of the good things they desire, and which they see are at your disposal.

God is surrounded by beings full of charity, who seek from him the blessings of charity which are at his disposal; so that he may properly be styled the king of charity.

In like manner you are surrounded by a small number of persons, over whom you reign in your own style. These persons are full of worldly desires. They ask of you the good things of this world. The love of worldly things attaches them to you. You are properly speaking, a king of worldly desires. Your kingdom is small in extent,

but as to the nature of your dominion, you are on a level with the greatest monarchs. They are like you, kings of worldly desires. These desires constitute their power, or rather the possession of things which are the objects of such desires.

But being acquainted with your natural condition, use the instruments appropriate to it, and do not pretend to reign by any other way than that by which you were made king. It is not your own strength or natural power that has drawn around you so many persons. Do not presume, then, to rule them by force, nor treat them with harshness. Satisfy their just desires—relieve their necessities—make it your delight to do good—promote their advancement as far as lies in your power, and you will be a just prince of this world.

But what I have just said, leads you but a little way; if you stop here, you will not secure your future felicity, though you will at least perish like an honourable man, as far as relates to this world. There are people who take the road to hell, through avarice, brutality, violence, outrage, and blasphemy. The conduct I have advised you to pursue is undoubtedly more respectable; but it is enormous folly to expose oneself to damnation in any way: for this reason I entreat you not to stop here. You must despise worldly desires, and that kingdom to which they belong, and aspire after the kingdom of charity, where all the subjects breathe only charity, and seek only the blessings of charity. Others, besides myself, will tell you what path to take; it is enough for me

to have deterred you from entering on those licentious courses, in which I see many persons of rank indulge themselves, for want of understanding their own nature.

NOTE

REFERRED TO IN PAGE 225.

PASCAL alludes to the miracle said to have been wrought on the discovery, by Queen Helena, of the crosses of the Saviour and the two malefactors. The account may be found in Sulpitius Severus, Hist. Sacr. lib. II. cap. 34. Ejusdem reginæ beneficio crux Domini tum reperta, &c. Helena, he informs us, having, by the assistance of a large body of soldiers and others, discovered three crosses, was much perplexed by what means to distinguish the cross of the Saviour from the other two. At last the expedient was adopted of placing a person, recently deceased, on each of them; no effect was produced by two, but on touching the third, the man was instantly restored to life, which in the opinion of all the beholders, decided the point.—Socrates, Hist. Ecc. lib. I. 17. and Theodoret, lib. I. 18. mention that a woman of rank was recovered from a dangerous illness by the application of the cross, but say nothing respecting the other miracle. Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. lib. II. cap. 1. mentions both miracles, and also that the inscription belonging to the cross was found, though not attached to it. Eusebius is totally silent on the subject.

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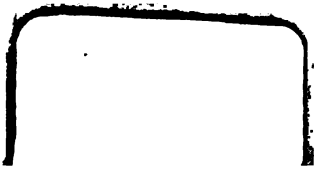

XXIII. One language with respect to another, is a cipher, in which words are changed for words, and not letters for letters; and thus an unknown language is decipherable.

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XXV. As we speak of poetical beauty, we might with equal propriety speak also of geometrical or medical beauty. Yet these phrases are not in use, and for this reason, that we know very well what is the object of geometry, and of medicine, but we do not know wherein that power of pleasing consists, which is the object of poetry. We do not know what that natural model is, which we ought to imitate, and for want of this knowledge, a number of strange phrases have been invented, such as, *the golden age*, *the wonder of the times*, *the fatal laurel*, *the beauteous star*, &c. this jargon is called poetic beauty! But let any one imagine a female attired after this model, and what will he behold? a damsel bedizened all over with mirrors and other finery, a sight which, so far from being graceful, will be extremely ridiculous; for what constitutes beauty in a woman is much better known than for what reason poetry

pleases us. Yet people who are no judges of female beauty, would perhaps admire our fine lady; in many villages she would be taken for the queen: and this is why some call sonnets written in this gairish style, *village queens.*

XXVI. If a passion or impression be properly delineated, we immediately find the original in our own breasts, where it existed before, without our knowledge, and directly conceive an affection for the person who has pointed it out: we feel indebted to him, not so much for presenting us with something new, as for making us better acquainted with our own stores: this community in knowledge necessarily excites our regard.

XXVII. To be agreeable, as well as true, is essential to eloquence; but this very agreeableness ought to have truth for its basis.

XXVIII. When people meet with a work written in a natural style, they are transported with delight and wonder: for where they expected to meet with an author, they find a man. On the other hand, persons of good taste, who, judging by themselves, expect on opening a book to find a man, are surprised to find only an author, *plus poeticè quàm humanè locutus est.* None honour nature more than those who show that she can speak on all subjects, Theology itself not excepted.

XXIX. The last thing we can settle in the composition of a work, is, how to begin it.

XXX. In discourse, (whether written or spoken,) it is ill-judged to digress from the topic in hand, unless for the sake of relieving the mind; and this too only at proper seasons; for unseasonable diversion is irksome: we are repelled and disgusted by it altogether: so difficult is it to retain any hold on the mind when it ceases to receive pleasure. Pleasure is the precious metal for which we barter away every thing.

XXXI. How vain is the art of painting, which excites admiration by copies, of which we do not admire the originals!

XXXII. The sense varies according to the words which express it; so that it receives dignity from words instead of giving it to them.

XXXIII. Those who are accustomed to judge by feeling, never can comprehend subjects that require a process of reasoning. They want to see through things at the first glance; they are unused to the investigation of principles. Others, on the contrary, who are accustomed to ratiocination, cannot apprehend subjects of mere feeling: for instead of seeing things at a glance, they are busy in examining principles.

XXXIV. True eloquence despises what is often called eloquence: true morality despises what currently passes for such: that is to say, the morality of sound reason despises the morality of fancy, which is without a standard.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE.

I. In proportion to a man's intelligence, a greater number of original characters will be observed in society. To common minds the various shades of mental constitution are imperceptible.

II. It is possible to possess a sound understanding, but one which, at the same time, is limited in its range: for we meet with men, who, while they are quite at home on one class of subjects, discover a total inaptitude for any other. Some can deduce consequences from a few principles, and others from many principles. For instance, there are those who are particularly versed in the properties of water, of which the principles are few, but their ramifications so minute, that the greatest penetration is requisite to trace them. Such persons are not likely to be eminent mathematicians, for the principles of Geometry are numerous, and the mind may be so constructed, that it can thoroughly comprehend a few principles, while it is unable to explore a science of which the principles are numerous.

Hence it appears that there are two sorts of intellect; one that can penetrate vigorously and deeply into the consequences of a given principle, and may be called the intellect of delicate discrimination; the

other that can comprehend a number of principles without confounding them, and is the geometrical intellect; the one is distinguished by quickness and correctness of tact; the other by comprehensiveness. The one may exist without the other, that is to say, the mind may be acute without comprehensiveness; or comprehensive without strength.

There is a great difference between the geometrical and the delicate intellect. The principles adapted to the former are palpable, but so remote from common use, that, through mere desuetude, it is difficult to turn our attention to them; but no sooner is this done, than they appear most obvious; and it would indicate unusual obtuseness of perception, not to reason correctly on principles so exceedingly plain.

But the principles adapted to a mind of nice discernment, are those brought into action in the daily business of life. No effort, therefore, is necessary to give our attention to them; they are before our eyes, and nothing is requisite on our part but clear perception: but that is indispensable; for the principles are so delicate and numerous, that it is almost impossible to prevent some escaping our notice. And the omission of any one principle leads into error; so that in the first place, a very clear perception is needed to discern all of them; and then a logical talent to apprehend their legitimate consequences.

All geometricians would discriminate with nicety had they a clear view of the requisite principles; and men of nice discernment would be geometricians, if they could only fix their attention on the principles

of a science so foreign to their habits. The reason, then, why some men of delicate minds are not geometricians, is, that they are absolutely incapable of fixing their attention on the principles of Geometry; but the reason why Geometricians are not men of nice discernment, is, that they are too abstracted; having been used to the well-defined and palpable principles of Geometry, and not to draw any inferences till they have familiarized themselves with first principles, they are bewildered on subjects of which the principles are too delicate to be so roughly handled. Indeed, the latter can scarcely be said to be the objects of perception, but rather of feeling; and wherever this is wanting, it is a defect not to be supplied by instruction. To apprehend things so delicate and so numerous, requires a tact extremely delicate and correct; and, for the most part, an attempt to demonstrate them geometrically would be futile: the principles are held so differently, that it would be an endless and unprofitable labour. The mind must seize upon the object at once, without any process of reasoning, at least none formally such. It is therefore very unusual for geometricians to possess this refined tact, or for persons who do possess it, to be geometricians: the former would treat matters of feeling geometrically, to a degree perfectly ridiculous, commencing with definitions and so going on to principles, a mode of reasoning entirely unsuited to such topics. Not that the mind arrives at a conclusion without reasoning, but the process is silent and inartificial; the expression of it in words is beyond the power of any man, and the feeling itself is possessed by very few.

Minds of delicate discernment, on the contrary, being used to decide at a glance, are so astonished when presented with propositions which must be incomprehensible, till they have learned a multitude of dry definitions and principles, and which they have never before seen in such guise, that they feel repelled and disgusted.

From both these classes persons of obtuse and illogical minds are excluded.

Geometricians, who are geometricians and nothing else, reason correctly, provided every thing is set before them by way of definition and principles: but when they attempt subjects on which this cannot be done, their blunders are intolerable; for unless the principles are extremely palpable, they are sure to err. Those again who are possessed of delicate discrimination, but without a particle of mathematical talent, have not the patience in matters of speculation and imagination, to descend to first principles which they never meet with in society and actual life.

III. It often happens, that in order to prove certain general truths, we take particular examples, the proofs of which rest upon the general truths; yet by the very use of them for this purpose, one effect is sure to follow, namely, that as we always suppose the difficulty to lie in the thing to be proved, these examples appear so much the clearer. Thus, when we wish to explain a general principle, we give the rule for a particular case; but if we wish to explain a particular case, we begin with the general principle. The thing to be proved always appears obscure, and

the medium of proof clear; for as soon as we set about proving any thing, our imagination is instantly filled with the notion of its obscurity; and, on the contrary, we suppose that what is employed to prove it must be clear, and therefore receive that without difficulty.

IV. All our reasoning is reduced to yield to natural feeling. But fancy is both similar and contrary to natural feeling; similar, because it does not reason, and contrary, because it is deceptive: it is therefore very difficult to distinguish between these two opposites. One man says, that my natural feeling is fancy, and that his fancy is natural feeling; and I, on my part, use the same language. A standard is wanted; reason offers one, but it may be turned in any direction; so that in fact there is none whatever.

V. Those who form their judgment of things by fixed rules, are, in respect of others, like those who carry watches in respect of those who have none. One man says, 'We have been here two hours;' another says, 'We have been here only three quarters of an hour.' I take out my watch and say to the first, 'You have been ill entertained it seems;' and to the other, 'Your time has passed away very agreeably, for we have been here exactly one hour and a half:' as to the people that say my time has hung heavily on my hands, and that I guess its length by my feeling, I only smile at their remark; they are not aware all the while, that I judge by my watch.

VI. Some men speak well, who are very indifferent writers. The reason is, that the place, the audience, and other circumstances, kindle their minds, and excite them to greater efforts than they could make without such a stimulus.

VII. It is difficult to come at what is valuable in Montaigne. What is faulty, (I mean exclusive of his moral sentiments,) might have been corrected in a moment, had any one given him a hint that he was too fond of telling stories, and of talking about himself.

VIII. It is a very bad practice to follow the exception instead of the general rule. We should adhere rigidly to the latter, and keep clear of exceptions. On the other hand, as it is certain that exceptions will sometimes occur, we must temper our strictness by good sense, that we may know when to admit them.

IX. There are persons who would not allow an author to write on subjects that have been already handled, because in that case (say they) he would write nothing new. But if the thoughts should not be new, yet their arrangement may be different. In playing at tennis the same ball is used, but one man can play it much better than another. It seems to me that with equal propriety they might find fault with a writer for employing the words already in use; as if the same thoughts, differently arranged, would not form substantially a new production, just as the same words, differently arranged, form new thoughts.

X. Men, in general, are more completely persuaded by the suggestions of their own minds, than by reasons offered them by others.

XI. It is natural for the intellect to believe, and for the will to love; so that these powers, when at a loss for real objects, fix on such as are false.

XII. Those strained exertions to which the soul is sometimes impelled, produce no lasting effects. It only makes a leap and immediately descends to its former level.

XIII. Man is neither an angel or a brute, but the misfortune is, that a being who aspires to be an angel, sinks into a brute.

XIV. If we know a man's ruling passion we make sure of pleasing him: and yet as every one has fancies contrary to his real interest, or even to what he deems to be such, the character of an individual often acquires a whimsical turn, which puts those persons out, who wish to ingratiate themselves with him.

XV. A horse does not trouble itself about the admiration of its fellow. Perhaps some sort of emulation is excited at the course; but put them in the stable, and the clumsiest and most ill shaped will not give up its oats to another. It is not so with human beings; no individual is content with his own advantages, but wishes to set himself off to the disparagement of others.

XVI. The moral sentiments may be injured in the same way as the intellectual powers; for both are affected by intercourse with our fellow men, and according as this varies, they are improved or deteriorated. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know what society to select; but this knowledge can only be gained by having mixed with society without receiving a wrong bias. Here is a circle, from which happy are those who escape!

XVII. As long as we are ignorant of those parts of nature which are not absolutely necessary for our welfare, it is perhaps not to be regretted, that men should agree in their notions, though erroneous, since it allays the agitation of their minds. I may mention, as an example, the opinion that diseases and the changes of the seasons are affected by the moon. It is one of the chief maladies of our nature, to indulge a restless curiosity about things beyond the limits of our knowledge; and I do not know whether it is not a less evil, to be settled down in error respecting such objects, than to be perpetually disquieted by a useless curiosity.

XVIII. If lightning struck the lowest, as well as the highest places, poets and others, whose reasonings consist of analogies and resemblances taken from natural phenomena, would be left without arguments.

XIX. The intellect has a method of its own, that is, by principles and demonstrations. The heart has a different one. We cannot prove that we

ought to be loved by formally explaining the cau of love; this would be ridiculous.

Jesus Christ and Saint Paul have employed t method of the heart, which is that of charity, mu more than the method of the intellect; their gr aim was not to illuminate the understanding, but warm the heart; and so it was with Saint Augustir This method consists principally in handling eve topic that bears a relation to the main object, in su a manner as to render *that* more conspicuous.

XX. There are some persons who would put a the world under a disguise. They never speak of *t king*, but always of *the August Monarch*; you nev hear them say *Paris*, but always *the metropolis* o *the kingdom*. There are some occasions when Par should be simply called *Paris*, and at other times w may style it, *the metropolis of the kingdom*.

XXI. When the same words recur in a composi tion, and we find, on attempting to make an altera tion, that their removal would injure the work, they ought to be left; for this settles their propriety, and to substitute others would indicate nothing but an hy percritical spirit, incapable of discerning the propriety of such repetitions sometimes: for no general rule can be given.

XXII. Those who throw their sentences into a certain form to make antitheses, are like persons who put in false windows for symmetry. They attend to the correctness, not of their thoughts, but of their figures.

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XXXIV. True eloquence despises what is often called eloquence: true morality despises what currently passes for such: that is to say, the morality of sound reason despises the morality of fancy, which is without a standard.

XXXV. All the false beauties which we rep hend in Cicero, have found plenty of admirers.

XXXVI. To despise philosophy is to act t part of a true philosopher.

XXXVII. Many people hear a sermon in th same manner as they hear vespers.

XXXVIII. Rivers are moving roads which carry us wherever we wish to go.

XXXIX. Two similar countenances, neither of which would make us smile if seen by itself, make us smile by their resemblance, when seen together.

XL. Astrologers and Alchymists have some sound principles, but make a wrong use of them. Now the abuse of truths deserves to be punished as much as the introduction of falsehood.

XLI. I cannot pardon Des Cartes. He would have been well pleased to have made no reference to the Deity, in his whole system of Philosophy: he therefore introduces him just to set the universe in motion by a touch of the finger, and after that has nothing more for a God to do.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE.

I. No philosopher has shown himself better acquainted with the duties of man than EPICTETUS. The first lessons he taught, were, to consider the Deity as the supreme object of regard; to believe that he governs the universe with justice; to submit to him with sincerity of heart; to obey him on all occasions as managing every thing with infinite wisdom; and, by cultivating such a temper of mind, to stifle all complaints and murmurs, and prepare the spirit to endure with composure the most distressing events. "Never say, 'I have lost something,' say rather, 'I have given it back;' 'my son is dead, I have given him back;' 'my wife is dead, I have given her back'—and so with your property and every thing else. 'But I have been deprived of it,' say you, 'by a wicked man.' What then? he is only the instrument in the hands of God, why should you complain if *he* should require that back again which he was pleased to lend you? As long as he grants you the use of it, it is your duty to take care of it, as the property of another, just as a traveller would do at an inn." "You ought not," said Epictetus again, "to wish that events should happen according to your pleasure; but it should be your pleasure that they happen as they actually do. Recollect," he adds, "that you are an actor, and are to play your

part in the drama, as the master of the scenes chooses to appoint. If he appoints you a short piece, act it: if he gives you a long piece, act it: remain upon the stage just as long as he pleases; appear there a noble or a beggar, as he sees fit. It is yours to sustain with propriety the character appointed, but to determine what that character shall be, belongs to another: by frequent meditation familiarize yourself with death and the evils that appear most intolerable: never conceive any thing base, and indulge no desires to excess."

Epictetus shows, in numberless instances, how man ought to act; he enjoins him to be humble, to conceal his good resolutions, especially when first formed, and to execute them in secret, and assures him, that nothing can spoil them so much as publicity. He reiterates again and again, that man's main study and desire should be to know the will of God, and to obey it.

Such, and so just, were the views of this great philosopher, respecting the extent of human obligation: happy would it have been for him had he been equally well acquainted with human weakness.

But with this clear perception of the duty of man, he erred egregiously as to the ability of man. "God," said he, "has given to every man the means of fulfilling his obligations; these means are always in our power: happiness must be sought for, only from things within our power, which are given by God for the very purpose. We must examine what there is at our own disposal. Property, life, and reputation, are not in our power, and do not lead to God:

but the intellect cannot be forced to believe what it knows to be false, nor can the will be forced to love that which it knows will make it unhappy; these two powers, then, are completely free, and by these alone we can attain to the perfection of our nature; by these we may know God, love, obey, and please him: by these we may subdue every vice, acquire every virtue, and render ourselves holy and fit companions for the Deity." These proud sentiments led him into other errors; as for instance, that the soul is a part of the divine essence; that pain and death are not evils; that suicide is lawful, and may be considered, in cases of emergency, as a compliance with the call of God to leave this world, &c.

II. MONTAIGNE, born in a Christian country, made a profession of the Catholic Religion; in this there was nothing remarkable: but as he determined to form a moral system on rational principles, without the lights of the Christian faith, it is a peculiarity which marks his speculations from the first, that he views man as entirely destitute of divine revelation. He proceeds to involve every thing in such universal and unmingled scepticism, as to doubt of his very doubts; his restless uncertainty returns back upon itself in a perpetual circle; he shows himself equally hostile to those who say, that every thing is uncertain, and to those who affirm that some things are certain, for he would assert nothing positively. The essence of his opinions consists in a doubting that doubts of its own existence, and an ignorance that is ignorant even of itself. He expresses noth-

the medium of proof clear; for as soon as we set about proving any thing, our imagination is instantly filled with the notion of its obscurity; and, on the contrary, we suppose that what is employed to prove it must be clear, and therefore receive that without difficulty.

IV. All our reasoning is reduced to yield to natural feeling. But fancy is both similar and contrary to natural feeling; similar, because it does not reason, and contrary, because it is deceptive: it is therefore very difficult to distinguish between these two opposites. One man says, that my natural feeling is fancy, and that his fancy is natural feeling; and I, on my part, use the same language. A standard is wanted; reason offers one, but it may be turned in any direction; so that in fact there is none whatever.

V. Those who form their judgment of things by fixed rules, are, in respect of others, like those who carry watches in respect of those who have none. One man says, 'We have been here two hours;' another says, 'We have been here only three quarters of an hour.' I take out my watch and say to the first, 'You have been ill entertained it seems;' and to the other, 'Your time has passed away very agreeably, for we have been here exactly one hour and a half:' as to the people that say my time has hung heavily on my hands, and that I guess its length by my feeling, I only smile at their remark; they are not aware all the while, that I judge by my watch.

VI. Some men speak well, who are very indifferent writers. The reason is, that the place, the audience, and other circumstances, kindle their minds, and excite them to greater efforts than they could make without such a stimulus.

VII. It is difficult to come at what is valuable in Montaigne. What is faulty, (I mean exclusive of his moral sentiments,) might have been corrected in a moment, had any one given him a hint that he was too fond of telling stories, and of talking about himself.

VIII. It is a very bad practice to follow the exception instead of the general rule. We should adhere rigidly to the latter, and keep clear of exceptions. On the other hand, as it is certain that exceptions will sometimes occur, we must temper our strictness by good sense, that we may know when to admit them.

IX. There are persons who would not allow an author to write on subjects that have been already handled, because in that case (say they) he would write nothing new. But if the thoughts should not be new, yet their arrangement may be different. In playing at tennis the same ball is used, but one man can play it much better than another. It seems to me that with equal propriety they might find fault with a writer for employing the words already in use; as if the same thoughts, differently arranged, would not form substantially a new production, just as the same words, differently arranged, form new thoughts.

X. Men, in general, are more completely persuaded by the suggestions of their own minds, than by reasons offered them by others.

XI. It is natural for the intellect to believe, and for the will to love; so that these powers, when at a loss for real objects, fix on such as are false.

XII. Those strained exertions to which the soul is sometimes impelled, produce no lasting effects. It only makes a leap and immediately descends to its former level.

XIII. Man is neither an angel or a brute, but the misfortune is, that a being who aspires to be an angel, sinks into a brute.

XIV. If we know a man's ruling passion we make sure of pleasing him: and yet as every one has fancies contrary to his real interest, or even to what he deems to be such, the character of an individual often acquires a whimsical turn, which puts those persons out, who wish to ingratiate themselves with him.

XV. A horse does not trouble itself about the admiration of its fellow. Perhaps some sort of emulation is excited at the course; but put them in the stable, and the clumsiest and most ill shaped will not give up its oats to another. It is not so with human beings; no individual is content with his own advantages, but wishes to set himself off to the disparagement of others.

XVI. The moral sentiments may be injured in the same way as the intellectual powers; for both are affected by intercourse with our fellow men, and according as this varies, they are improved or deteriorated. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know what society to select; but this knowledge can only be gained by having mixed with society without receiving a wrong bias. Here is a circle, from which happy are those who escape!

XVII. As long as we are ignorant of those parts of nature which are not absolutely necessary for our welfare, it is perhaps not to be regretted, that men should agree in their notions, though erroneous, since it allays the agitation of their minds. I may mention, as an example, the opinion that diseases and the changes of the seasons are affected by the moon. It is one of the chief maladies of our nature, to indulge a restless curiosity about things beyond the limits of our knowledge; and I do not know whether it is not a less evil, to be settled down in error respecting such objects, than to be perpetually disquieted by a useless curiosity.

XVIII. If lightning struck the lowest, as well as the highest places, poets and others, whose reasonings consist of analogies and resemblances taken from natural phenomena, would be left without arguments.

XIX. The intellect has a method of its own, that is, by principles and demonstrations. The heart has a different one. We cannot prove that we

avoidable. All men are ambitious of dominion, but only some possess the power. But the ties which secure the respect of individuals to one another, are ties of the imagination.

LXVI. We are so unfortunate that we cannot take pleasure in any pursuit but on the condition of being chagrined if we are unsuccessful; which may be occasioned by a thousand accidents, and happens every hour. Whoever should discover the secret of enjoying a good without being affected by the contrary evil, will have gained a great point.

LXVII. We must not forget our own nature; we are body as well as spirit, and hence pure demonstration is not the instrument of persuasion. How very few things are there demonstrable! Arguments act only on the mind. Custom adds strength to argument; it enlists the senses on its side, which imperceptibly carry the understanding along with them. Who can demonstrate that the sun will rise to-morrow, or that we shall die? yet what is more universally believed? Custom persuades men of it; this it is which makes so many Turks and Pagans, this makes soldiers and artizans. It is true we must not appeal to custom when we are in quest of truth, but we must have recourse to it as soon as the understanding sees where the truth lies, that our minds may be thoroughly imbued with belief, of itself so volatile a thing; for to keep the arguments constantly before us would be endless trouble. We must acquire a more easy belief, and

such is that of custom, which, without violence, without art, without argument, produces belief, and so inclines all our faculties, that it costs us no effort to retain it. The two parts of our frame must act in unison; the mind convinced by those arguments which it suffices to have understood once in our lives, and the senses persuaded by habit, and not allowed to allure us in a contrary direction.

do on another principle, which is, that the probabilities being the same on both sides, example and utility turn the scale." He would follow the manners of his country, because they have the authority of custom; he mounts his horse, because his horse suffers him, but without knowing whether he has a right to do it; on the contrary, he does not pretend to determine whether the animal has not an equal right to make use of his services. He would put some restraint upon his passions, in order to avoid certain vices: for instance, he would preserve conjugal fidelity on account of the pain which would ensue on its violation: utility and tranquillity being the constant rules of his actions. He disowns all acquaintance with that stoical virtues which his imagination depicted with a haughty mien, a savage countenance, its hair stiff and untrimmed, its brow wrinkled and covered with sweat, abhorring the sight of man, and seated in sullen silence, and in a painful posture, upon the edge of a rock; a bugbear, says Montaigne, fit to frighten children; a troubled being that roams about after rest, but never finds it. The virtue he loved was simple, sociable, gay, sprightly, and playful: pursuing whatever took its fancy, it sported with accidents good or bad: it gently reposed on the lap of a tranquil indolence, while it showed mankind that the rest they were so anxiously seeking, was to be found only *there;* and that, (to use one of his own expressions,) ignorance and incuriousness are two charming pillows for a sound head.

III. On reading Montaigne, and comparing him with Epictetus, we cannot resist the impression that certainly they were the two ablest defenders of the two most celebrated sects in the heathen world, and the only ones, among men destitute of the light of Revelation, that were in any degree consistent. In fact, what could men do, in the absence of Revelation, but follow one or other of these two systems? The first maintained there is a God, therefore he created man and must have made him for himself: he has created him such as he ought to be, in order to become just and happy. Man, therefore, can arrive at a knowledge of the truth, and has the capacity to rise to God the supreme good. The second system maintained, man cannot rise to God; his inclinations contradict the law of God, he is impelled to seek for happiness in visible objects, even the most degrading. Every thing, then, is uncertain, even the true good; and thus it seems we are reduced to be without any fixed standard of morals, or certainty in the sciences.

It is very gratifying to observe, in these different trains of reasoning, that both parties caught a glimpse of the truth they attempted to discover. It is pleasing to observe in nature the desire she manifests to represent God in all his works, and in which, since they are his image, we cannot fail to discern some traces of him; but how much more interesting is it to observe in intelligent beings, the efforts they make to arrive at truth, and to notice how far they have been successful and where they have failed! This is indeed the chief advantage to be derived from the speculations before us.

The source of the errors of Epictetus and the Stoics on the one hand, and of Montaigne and the Epicureans on the other, appears to consist, in not being aware that the present state of man differs from that of his creation. The one discerned some traces of his primitive grandeur, but being ignorant of his corruption, looked upon his nature as uninjured and in no need of a renovator, and thus was led to the very summit of pride. The others recognized his present misery, but ignorant of his primitive dignity, concluded that his nature was necessarily weak and beyond recovery; and so despaired of ever arriving at real good, and plunged themselves into extreme licentiousness. These two states of human nature, which must be known together, in order to apprehend the whole truth, if they are known apart, necessarily subject the mind to one of these two vices, pride or indolence; a thraldom which it is impossible for men to escape before they are in a state of grace: for if their disordered state does not issue in licentiousness, it displays itself by vanity, and they are always slaves to the malignant passions to which, as Saint Augustine remarks, men sacrifice in various forms.

The consequence of this imperfect knowledge of human nature has been, that those who knew the weakness of man, but not his obligations, degraded themselves by licentiousness; others who knew his obligations, but not his weakness, were puffed up with pride. It might perhaps be supposed, that by blending these two sects, a perfect system of morals might be formed; but instead of harmony,

the result of such an attempt would only be war and universal destruction; while one side dogmatised, and the other doubted; while one maintained the grandeur of man, and the other exposed his weakness, union and conciliation would be impossible: they could neither stand alone on account of their defects, nor unite on account of their contradictions.

IV. But these systems must be broken in pieces and destroyed, to make way for revealed truth. This it is which harmonizes the greatest contrarieties by an art which may well be called divine. Combining all that is true, dissipating all that is false, it determines with celestial wisdom, the point of union for principles that were totally irreconcilable in the schools of Philosophy. Nor is it difficult to find out the reason of this. The wise men of the world placed their contrarieties in the same subject; it was the same nature to which one sect attributed strength, and another weakness, but revelation instructs us to place the strength and the weakness in different subjects; all the infirmity is our own, all the power is God's. This, this, is the unthought-of and astonishing union, that none but God could reveal, because none but God could produce it, being the image and effect of the ineffable union of the two natures in the one person of the God-man.

It is thus that philosophy insensibly leads us to Theology, into which, indeed, we can scarcely avoid entering, whatever truth may be our immediate object; since it is the centre of all truths. And in the instance before us, it so admirably combines the

distinguishing tenets of two opposite systems, that we do not see how the partizans of either can refuse submitting to its guidance. If they delight in contemplating the power of man and the grandeur of his destiny, what can they imagine which will not infinitely fall short of the promises of the gospel, which bestows blessings worthy of nothing less than the death of a God. And if they are disposed to contemplate the weakness of human nature, their utmost conceptions can never equal the real impotence of sin, of which that death is the remedy. Each party will here find more than they could desire, and, above all, a perfect union of truths which neither could unite in a degree infinitely inferior.

V. Christians in general have little occasion for the lessons of Philosophy. But Epictetus has an admirable talent for disquieting those who seek repose in external things; he compels them to acknowledge that they are blind and miserable slaves, and that they can escape the error and misery they so much dread, only by yielding themselves without reserve to God. Montaigne again is incomparable for confounding the pride of those unbelievers who pretend that they possess real rectitude; and also for undeceiving those who are wedded to their own opinions, and who, without admitting the existence and perfections of the Deity, expect to find incontrovertible truths in science. He so thoroughly convicts reason of its ignorance and its errors, that it will scarcely be disposed to reject mysteries on account of their supposed contradictions; its courage will be so

daunted, that it will be very far from wishing to judge whether mysteries are possible—a point that men in general are too fond of agitating. But Epictetus, while he disturbs our indolence, excites our pride, and will be injurious to those who are not persuaded that real rectitude can be produced only by the Christian faith. On the other hand, Montaigne is absolutely pernicious to those who are inclined to impiety and vicious practices. For this reason, his statements ought to be guarded with great care and discretion, in reference to the situation and morals of those who read them. But the lessons of these two philosophers united, would perhaps be useful, because one would correct the faults of the other. It is true they could not communicate virtue, but they might render vice painful. Man would find himself acted upon by two opposite forces, of which, while one crushed his pride, the other would disturb his indolence, and he would be unable, by the resources of his own reason merely, to enjoy repose in either of these vices, or to escape altogether from both.

what authority *they* pretend to judge of the Supreme Being, who, by the very definition of such a Being, must be infinite—*they* who do not really know the most insignificant object in nature! He asks them on what principles they take their stand, and presses for a reply. He examines all the arguments they can produce, and with an acuteness, for which he is remarkable, shows the weakness of such as they esteem the clearest and most indubitable. He asks whether the soul can really know any thing? whether it can know itself? whether it is a substance or an accident? body or spirit? and what each of these existences is? and whether there is not something different from both of them? whether the soul can know its own body? whether it knows what matter is? whether it knows how it can reason if it be matter? and how it can be united to a body, and feel what that suffers, if it be spiritual? When did the soul begin to exist? at the same time as the body or before? will it perish with the body or not? does it never deceive itself? does it know when it mistakes, since the essence of a mistake consists in forgetfulness? Again, he asks whether animals reason, think, or converse? who can decide what is the nature of *time*, *space*, *extension*, *motion*, *unity*; things by which we are surrounded, and yet utterly inexplicable: what is *health*, *sickness*, *death*, *life*, *good* and *evil*, *justice*, *sin*, terms which are constantly on our lips? Are there any principles of truth, and are those we believe, and which we call *axioms* or *common notions*, conformable to essential truth? Since we know only by Revelation that a Being perfectly good has given

true principles of knowledge, having created us to know the truth,—who can tell, apart from this illumination, whether being the offspring of chance, our notions are simply uncertain, or whether created by a malevolent being, he has given us false notions in order to lead us astray? Thus he shows that God and truth are inseparable, and that according as the former does or does not exist, is faithful or deceptive, so must the latter be. Who can tell whether that *common sense*, which is generally taken as the touchstone of truth, was designed for this purpose by him who bestowed it? who can tell what is truth? and how can we be certain of possessing it, without knowing it? who indeed can tell what *Being* is, a term too general to be defined, since we must make use of it in attempting to explain it: when we say that *it is* such and such a thing? Now if we do not know what the *soul* is, or *body*, *time*, *space*, *motion*, *truth*, *good*, nor even *being*, nor can explain our ideas of them, how can we be certain that these ideas are uniform in all men? we have no other mark, but an uniformity in consequences, and this is not a constant sign of uniformity in principles, for these may be very different, and conduct nevertheless to the same conclusions: every one is aware that truth is often educed from falsehood.

Lastly, Montaigne minutely examines the sciences: geometry for example; the uncertainty of which he attempts to show, in its axioms and undefined terms, such as *extension* and *motion;* he points out in numberless instances the defects of natural philosophy and medicine, and treats in the same manner, history,

law is established, puts you in possession of your property.

I do not mean to say, that this wealth does not lawfully belong to you, and that another person has a right to seize it; for God, who is its real proprietor, has allowed civil society to make laws for property, and when the laws are established, it is unjust to violate them. This makes some slight difference between yourself and the man we have been speaking of, who owed his elevation only to the mistake of the people, an elevation God would not have authorized, but would have obliged him to renounce, while he does authorize the tenure of your property. But in one point you perfectly agree with him, namely, that your right is not founded on any personal qualification or merit. Your soul and body would, in themselves, have equally suited the rank of a cobbler or a duke; there is no natural connection which should attach them to one condition more than to another. But what are we to infer from this? That you ought, like the man we have been speaking of, to have a double train of thought; and if you assume before men the honours allotted to your rank, you ought less openly, but more truly, to acknowledge that naturally you are in no respect above them. If the view of your adventitious distinctions elevates you, in your own apprehension, above the multitude, the consideration of the qualities common to you and to them, should humble you, and produce a sense of that perfect equality with all mankind which is your natural state.

The people who admire you probably are not

those sins which without his aid they could not have known. But, on the contrary, the tone of his morals is perfectly Pagan. Let us give a sketch of it.

Proceeding on this principle, that to mere human reason every thing is uncertain, and taking into the account the length of time we may seek for truth and happiness, without making any progress towards tranquillity, he comes to the conclusion, that we should dismiss all care about these subjects, and without perplexing ourselves, lightly skim over them, for fear of being lost, by pressing too hard; that we should assume those views to be true and just which appear to be so, because if we attempt to grasp such volatile substances, they slip between our fingers and leave our hands empty.

He would follow the evidence of the senses and common notions, because it would be doing violence to the mind to reject them; and since we are ignorant of the truth, we could not tell whether we should gain any thing if we disbelieved them.

He would also shun pain and death, because impelled by an instinct which he would not resist, for a similar reason. But he would not give full liberty to the natural emotions of fear, and dares not conclude that they are really caused by great evils, because there are emotions of pleasure which we accuse of being wrong; though nature, he says, asserts the contrary. "Thus there is nothing extravagant," he goes on to say, "in my conduct: I act like other people; and every thing which they do, under the foolish notion that they are following real good, I

do on another principle, which is, that the probabilities being the same on both sides, example and utility turn the scale." He would follow the manners of his country, because they have the authority of custom; he mounts his horse, because his horse suffers him, but without knowing whether he has a right to do it; on the contrary, he does not pretend to determine whether the animal has not an equal right to make use of his services. He would put some restraint upon his passions, in order to avoid certain vices: for instance, he would preserve conjugal fidelity on account of the pain which would ensue on its violation: utility and tranquillity being the constant rules of his actions. He disowns all acquaintance with that stoical virtues which his imagination depicted with a haughty mien, a savage countenance, its hair stiff and untrimmed, its brow wrinkled and covered with sweat, abhorring the sight of man, and seated in sullen silence, and in a painful posture, upon the edge of a rock; a bugbear, says Montaigne, fit to frighten children; a troubled being that roams about after rest, but never finds it. The virtue he loved was simple, sociable, gay, sprightly, and playful: pursuing whatever took its fancy, it sported with accidents good or bad: it gently reposed on the lap of a tranquil indolence, while it showed mankind that the rest they were so anxiously seeking, was to be found only *there;* and that, (to use one of his own expressions,) ignorance and incuriousness are two charming pillows for a sound head.

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part in the drama, as the master of the scenes chooses to appoint. If he appoints you a short piece, act it: if he gives you a long piece, act it: remain upon the stage just as long as he pleases; appear there a noble or a beggar, as he sees fit. It is yours to sustain with propriety the character appointed, but to determine what that character shall be, belongs to another: by frequent meditation familiarize yourself with death and the evils that appear most intolerable: never conceive any thing base, and indulge no desires to excess."

EPICTETUS shows, in numberless instances, how man ought to act; he enjoins him to be humble, to conceal his good resolutions, especially when first formed, and to execute them in secret, and assures him, that nothing can spoil them so much as publicity. He reiterates again and again, that man's main study and desire should be to know the will of God, and to obey it.

Such, and so just, were the views of this great philosopher, respecting the extent of human obligation: happy would it have been for him had he been equally well acquainted with human weakness.

But with this clear perception of the duty of man, he erred egregiously as to the ability of man. "God," said he, "has given to every man the means of fulfilling his obligations; these means are always in our power: happiness must be sought for, only from things within our power, which are given by God for the very purpose. We must examine what there is at our own disposal. Property, life, and reputation, are not in our power, and do not lead to God:

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II. MONTAIGNE, born in a Christian country, made a profession of the Catholic Religion; in this there was nothing remarkable: but as he determined to form a moral system on rational principles, without the lights of the Christian faith, it is a peculiarity which marks his speculations from the first, that he views man as entirely destitute of divine revelation. He proceeds to involve every thing in such universal and unmingled scepticism, as to doubt of his very doubts; his restless uncertainty returns back upon itself in a perpetual circle; he shows himself equally hostile to those who say, that every thing is uncertain, and to those who affirm that some things are certain, for he would assert nothing positively. The essence of his opinions consists in a doubting that doubts of its own existence, and an ignorance that is ignorant even of itself. He expresses noth-

ing in positive terms; for to say that he doubted, would betray his main principle, by rendering it certain at least that he doubted. As a formal assertion would be contrary to his professions, he is reduced to the necessity of explaining himself by interrogations: for instance, to avoid the assertion, *I do not know*, he says, *How can I know?* He takes this phrase for his motto, placed under a pair of scales held by opposite weights in perfect equilibrium. In one word, he was a pure Pyrrhonist. All his discourses, all his *Essays* go upon this principle; and it is the only point which he pretends to have settled. He insensibly unsettles every thing that is considered most certain in society, not to establish the contrary, (for certainty is the only thing he cannot endure,) but merely to show, that appearances being equal on both sides, an unwavering belief is an impossibility.

In this temper, he ridicules all attempts at certainty in any thing; he opposes, for example, those persons who think of providing an effective remedy for law-suits, by the multiplicity and justice of the laws, as if they could cut up by the root those doubts which are the causes of litigation, as if they could form barriers which could stem the torrent of uncertainty and quell conjecture! In reference to this he says, *It would be as well to submit the decision of a cause to the first person that happens to pass by as to a bench of judges.* He seems perfectly unambitious of changing the established order of things; he is far from pretending that his opinion is better than that of any one else, but believes that all are bad. He only aims to prove the uncertainty of

received opinions; he maintains that the total abrogation of all law would do far more to lessen the number of disputes, than that huge mass of existing statutes, which, it seems to him, only serves to multiply them; for difficulties increase in proportion as they are examined, and obscurities become more obscure by comments. The best method, he tells us, of understanding a discourse, is not to examine it, but to take it as it appears at first blush: for as soon as we begin to study it, its meaning will become obscure.

On this plan, he decides at hazard on human actions and the events of history, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another; he adopts, without hesitation, the first views of things, not keeping his thoughts within bounds, by the restraints of reason, which, according to him, is a very unsafe guide. Delighted with exhibiting, in his own person, the contradictions that exist in the mind of a free-thinker, it is all one to him whether he is successful or not in argument, since either case illustrates the weakness of human opinion; so that his universal scepticism has the advantage of being fortified equally by victory and defeat. From this position, fluctuating and unsettled as it is, he attacks, with resistless intrepidity, the heretics of his day, on their pretensions to be the only true interpreters of Scripture, and from this position he explodes the horrid impiety of those who say that there is no God. He assails the Atheists particularly, in his apology for Raimonde de Sebonde, and asks them, abandoned as they voluntarily are to the light of nature, by rejecting all Revelation, by

what authority *they* pretend to judge of the Supreme Being, who, by the very definition of such a Being, must be infinite—*they* who do not really know the most insignificant object in nature! He asks them on what principles they take their stand, and presses for a reply. He examines all the arguments they can produce, and with an acuteness, for which he is remarkable, shows the weakness of such as they esteem the clearest and most indubitable. He asks whether the soul can really know any thing? whether it can know itself? whether it is a substance or an accident? body or spirit? and what each of these existences is? and whether there is not something different from both of them? whether the soul can know its own body? whether it knows what matter is? whether it knows how it can reason if it be matter? and how it can be united to a body, and feel what that suffers, if it be spiritual? When did the soul begin to exist? at the same time as the body or before? will it perish with the body or not? does it never deceive itself? does it know when it mistakes, since the essence of a mistake consists in forgetfulness? Again, he asks whether animals reason, think, or converse? who can decide what is the nature of *time*, *space*, *extension*, *motion*, *unity*; things by which we are surrounded, and yet utterly inexplicable: what is *health*, *sickness*, *death*, *life*, *good* and *evil*, *justice*, *sin*, terms which are constantly on our lips? Are there any principles of truth, and are those we believe, and which we call *axioms* or *common notions*, conformable to essential truth? Since we know only by Revelation that a Being perfectly good has given

true principles of knowledge, having created us to know the truth,—who can tell, apart from this illumination, whether being the offspring of chance, our notions are simply uncertain, or whether created by a malevolent being, he has given us false notions in order to lead us astray? Thus he shows that God and truth are inseparable, and that according as the former does or does not exist, is faithful or deceptive, so must the latter be. Who can tell whether that *common sense*, which is generally taken as the touchstone of truth, was designed for this purpose by him who bestowed it? who can tell what is truth? and how can we be certain of possessing it, without knowing it? who indeed can tell what *Being* is, a term too general to be defined, since we must make use of it in attempting to explain it: when we say that *it is* such and such a thing? Now if we do not know what the *soul* is, or *body*, *time*, *space*, *motion*, *truth*, *good*, nor even *being*, nor can explain our ideas of them, how can we be certain that these ideas are uniform in all men? we have no other mark, but an uniformity in consequences, and this is not a constant sign of uniformity in principles, for these may be very different, and conduct nevertheless to the same conclusions: every one is aware that truth is often educed from falsehood.

Lastly, Montaigne minutely examines the sciences: geometry for example; the uncertainty of which he attempts to show, in its axioms and undefined terms, such as *extension* and *motion;* he points out in numberless instances the defects of natural philosophy and medicine, and treats in the same manner, history,

politics, morals, and jurisprudence. So that without revelation, we must believe, according to him, that life is only a dream, from which we shall awake at death, and that as long as it lasts, we have actually as little perception of the principles of truth, as in the state we term *sleep*. In this manner, he unsparingly and rudely scrutinizes the qualifications of reason, bereft of supernatural aid: and having rendered it doubtful whether reason is itself reasonable, or whether brutes do not possess it either in a greater or less degree than man, he brings it down from the proud station it assumed, and places it as by favour, on a level with brutes, without allowing it to rise higher, till it has been taught by its Creator to what rank it really belongs: and more than this, he threatens, in case it murmurs, to reduce it still lower, which seemed to him no hard task.

Instead of permitting it to indulge in airs of foolish vanity, he allows it merely to make an acknowledgment of its weakness. We are rejoiced to witness, in this author, the defeat of proud reason by its own weapons, and the punishment of that horrible discord between man and man, which has reduced the human race, from that union with God which they vainly strive to attain by the maxims of their feeble reason, to the condition of brutes: and we should have felt a cordial esteem for the minister of such signal retribution, if, as an humble disciple of the Church, and in accordance with the rules of morality, after so usefully humbling men, he had persuaded them not to provoke, by fresh transgressions, that Being who alone could deliver them from

those sins which without his aid they could not have known. But, on the contrary, the tone of his morals is perfectly Pagan. Let us give a sketch of it.

Proceeding on this principle, that to mere human reason every thing is uncertain, and taking into the account the length of time we may seek for truth and happiness, without making any progress towards tranquillity, he comes to the conclusion, that we should dismiss all care about these subjects, and without perplexing ourselves, lightly skim over them, for fear of being lost, by pressing too hard; that we should assume those views to be true and just which appear to be so, because if we attempt to grasp such volatile substances, they slip between our fingers and leave our hands empty.

He would follow the evidence of the senses and common notions, because it would be doing violence to the mind to reject them; and since we are ignorant of the truth, we could not tell whether we should gain any thing if we disbelieved them.

He would also shun pain and death, because impelled by an instinct which he would not resist, for a similar reason. But he would not give full liberty to the natural emotions of fear, and dares not conclude that they are really caused by great evils, because there are emotions of pleasure which we accuse of being wrong; though nature, he says, asserts the contrary. "Thus there is nothing extravagant," he goes on to say, "in my conduct: I act like other people; and every thing which they do, under the foolish notion that they are following real good, I

do on another principle, which is, that the probabilities being the same on both sides, example and utility turn the scale." He would follow the manners of his country, because they have the authority of custom; he mounts his horse, because his horse suffers him, but without knowing whether he has a right to do it; on the contrary, he does not pretend to determine whether the animal has not an equal right to make use of his services. He would put some restraint upon his passions, in order to avoid certain vices: for instance, he would preserve conjugal fidelity on account of the pain which would ensue on its violation: utility and tranquillity being the constant rules of his actions. He disowns all acquaintance with that stoical virtues which his imagination depicted with a haughty mien, a savage countenance, its hair stiff and untrimmed, its brow wrinkled and covered with sweat, abhorring the sight of man, and seated in sullen silence, and in a painful posture, upon the edge of a rock; a bugbear, says Montaigne, fit to frighten children; a troubled being that roams about after rest, but never finds it. The virtue he loved was simple, sociable, gay, sprightly, and playful: pursuing whatever took its fancy, it sported with accidents good or bad: it gently reposed on the lap of a tranquil indolence, while it showed mankind that the rest they were so anxiously seeking, was to be found only *there;* and that, (to use one of his own expressions,) ignorance and incuriousness are two charming pillows for a sound head.

III. On reading Montaigne, and comparing him with Epictetus, we cannot resist the impression that certainly they were the two ablest defenders of the two most celebrated sects in the heathen world, and the only ones, among men destitute of the light of Revelation, that were in any degree consistent. In fact, what could men do, in the absence of Revelation, but follow one or other of these two systems? The first maintained there is a God, therefore he created man and must have made him for himself: he has created him such as he ought to be, in order to become just and happy. Man, therefore, can arrive at a knowledge of the truth, and has the capacity to rise to God the supreme good. The second system maintained, man cannot rise to God; his inclinations contradict the law of God, he is impelled to seek for happiness in visible objects, even the most degrading. Every thing, then, is uncertain, even the true good; and thus it seems we are reduced to be without any fixed standard of morals, or certainty in the sciences.

It is very gratifying to observe, in these different trains of reasoning, that both parties caught a glimpse of the truth they attempted to discover. It is pleasing to observe in nature the desire she manifests to represent God in all his works, and in which, since they are his image, we cannot fail to discern some traces of him; but how much more interesting is it to observe in intelligent beings, the efforts they make to arrive at truth, and to notice how far they have been successful and where they have failed! This is indeed the chief advantage to be derived from the speculations before us.

The source of the errors of Epictetus and the Stoics on the one hand, and of Montaigne and the Epicureans on the other, appears to consist, in not being aware that the present state of man differs from that of his creation. The one discerned some traces of his primitive grandeur, but being ignorant of his corruption, looked upon his nature as uninjured and in no need of a renovator, and thus was led to the very summit of pride. The others recognized his present misery, but ignorant of his primitive dignity, concluded that his nature was necessarily weak and beyond recovery; and so despaired of ever arriving at real good, and plunged themselves into extreme licentiousness. These two states of human nature, which must be known together, in order to apprehend the whole truth, if they are known apart, necessarily subject the mind to one of these two vices, pride or indolence; a thraldom which it is impossible for men to escape before they are in a state of grace: for if their disordered state does not issue in licentiousness, it displays itself by vanity, and they are always slaves to the malignant passions to which, as Saint Augustine remarks, men sacrifice in various forms.

The consequence of this imperfect knowledge of human nature has been, that those who knew the weakness of man, but not his obligations, degraded themselves by licentiousness; others who knew his obligations, but not his weakness, were puffed up with pride. It might perhaps be supposed, that by blending these two sects, a perfect system of morals might be formed; but instead of harmony,

the result of such an attempt would only be war and universal destruction; while one side dogmatised, and the other doubted; while one maintained the grandeur of man, and the other exposed his weakness, union and conciliation would be impossible: they could neither stand alone on account of their defects, nor unite on account of their contradictions.

IV. But these systems must be broken in pieces and destroyed, to make way for revealed truth. This it is which harmonizes the greatest contrarieties by an art which may well be called divine. Combining all that is true, dissipating all that is false, it determines with celestial wisdom, the point of union for principles that were totally irreconcilable in the schools of Philosophy. Nor is it difficult to find out the reason of this. The wise men of the world placed their contrarieties in the same subject; it was the same nature to which one sect attributed strength, and another weakness, but revelation instructs us to place the strength and the weakness in different subjects; all the infirmity is our own, all the power is God's. This, this, is the unthought-of and astonishing union, that none but God could reveal, because none but God could produce it, being the image and effect of the ineffable union of the two natures in the one person of the God-man.

It is thus that philosophy insensibly leads us to Theology, into which, indeed, we can scarcely avoid entering, whatever truth may be our immediate object; since it is the centre of all truths. And in the instance before us, it so admirably combines the